Why Readers Despised ALIEN

(see page 11)

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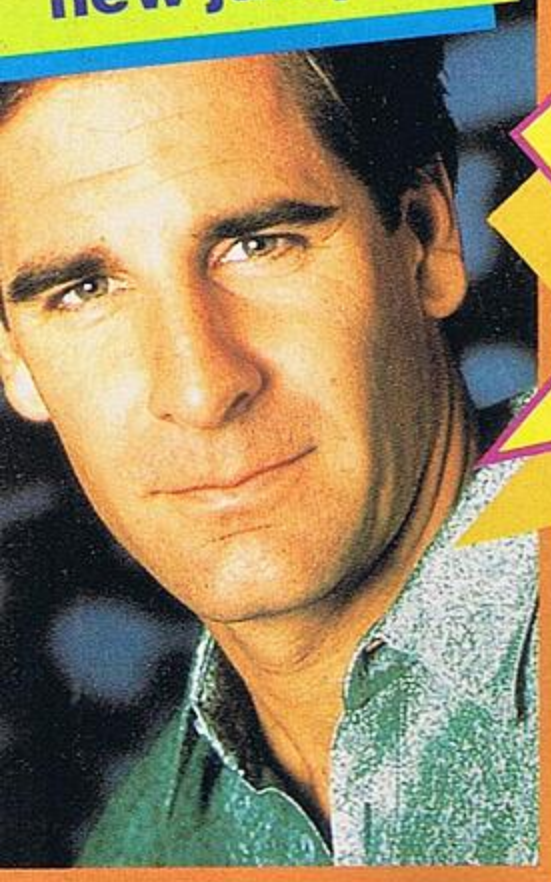
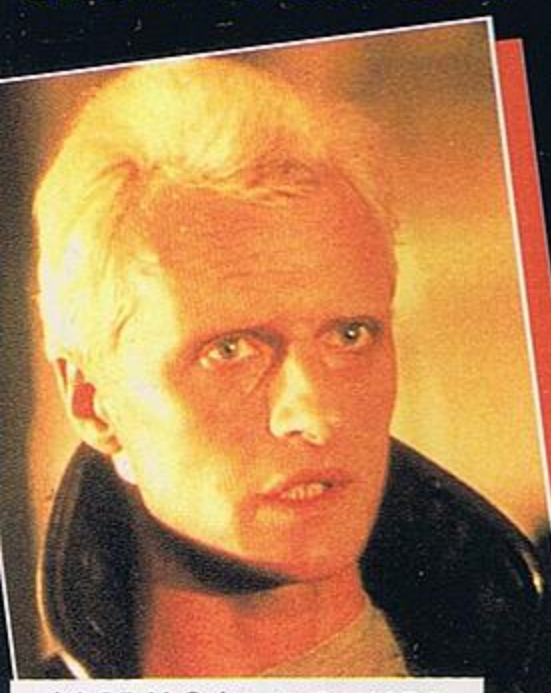
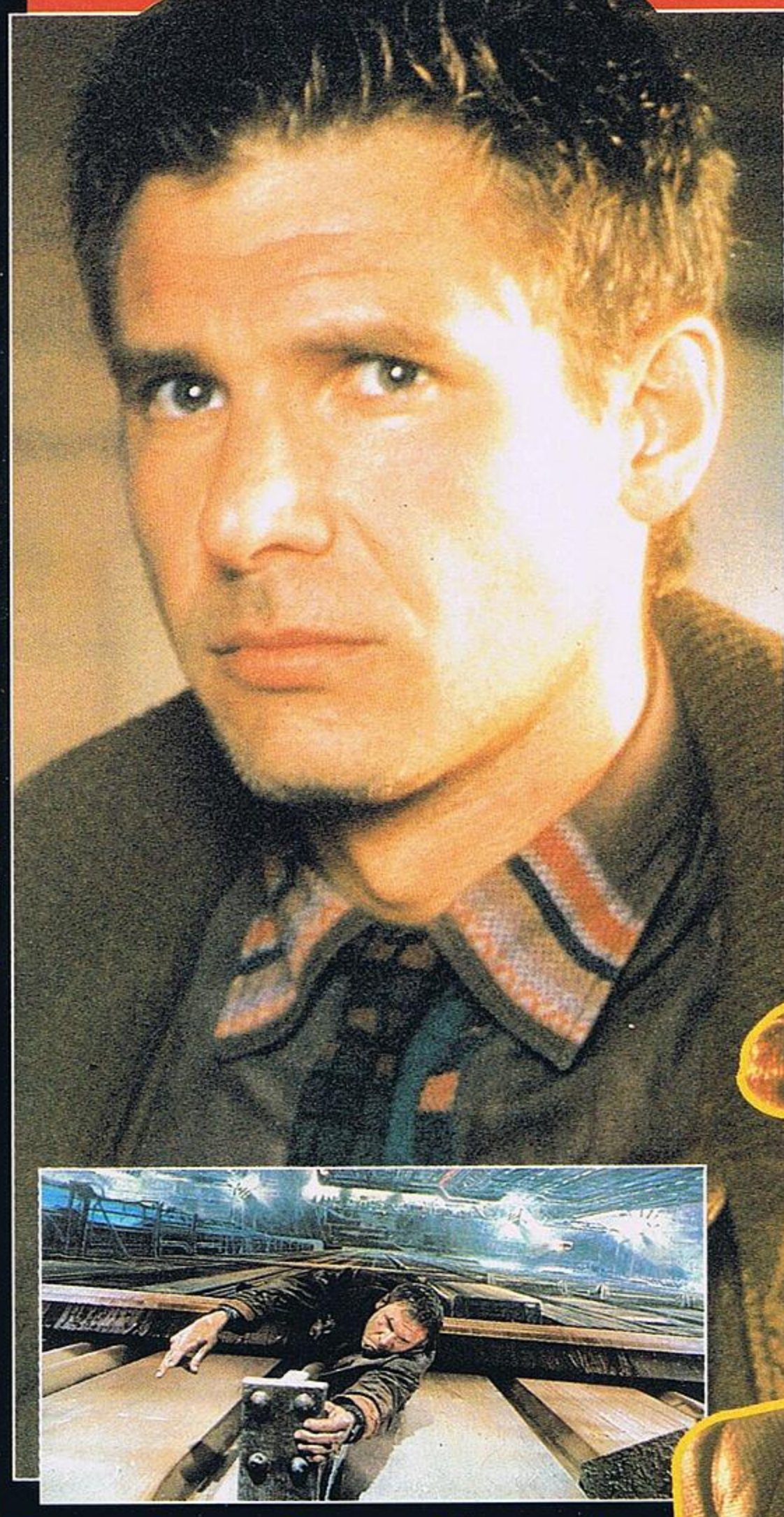
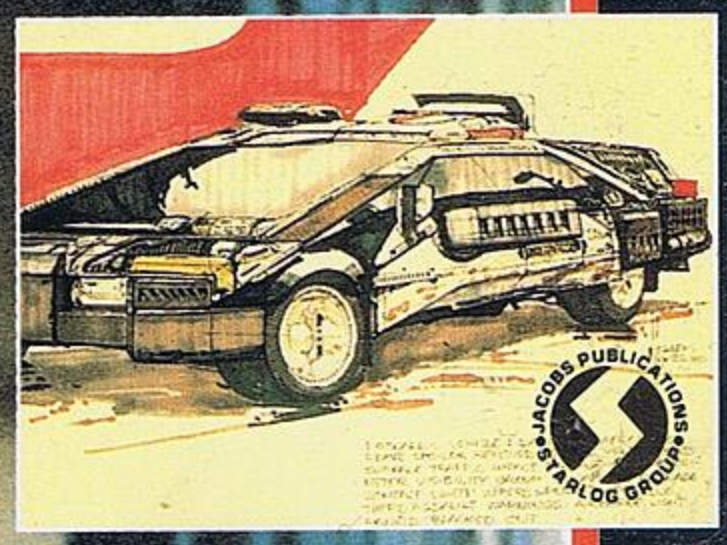
Sam's historic new jumps!

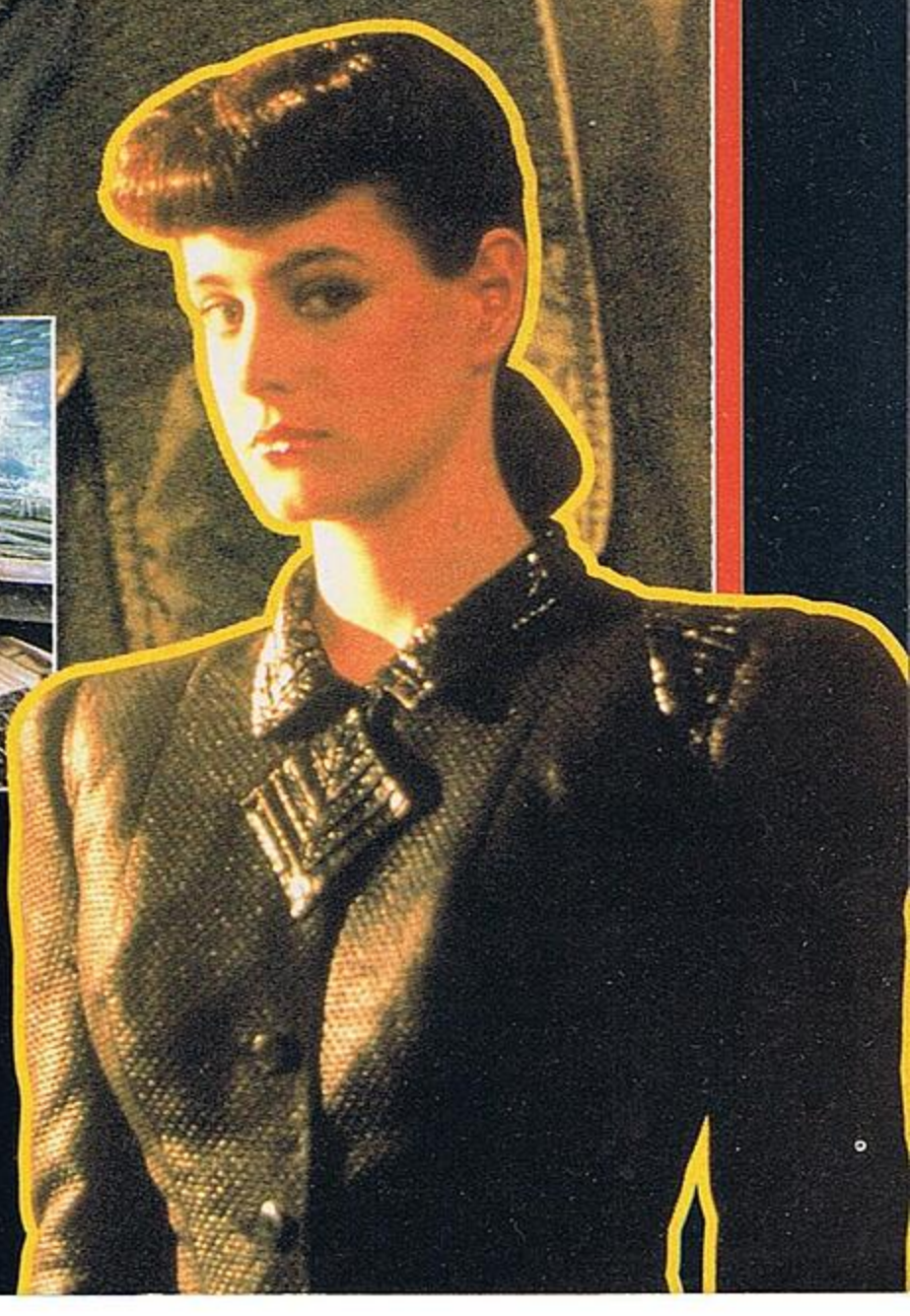


Ridley Scott's BLADE RUNNER
The making of a SF classic









Stephen Donaldson's Covenant Chronicles

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Alien comics

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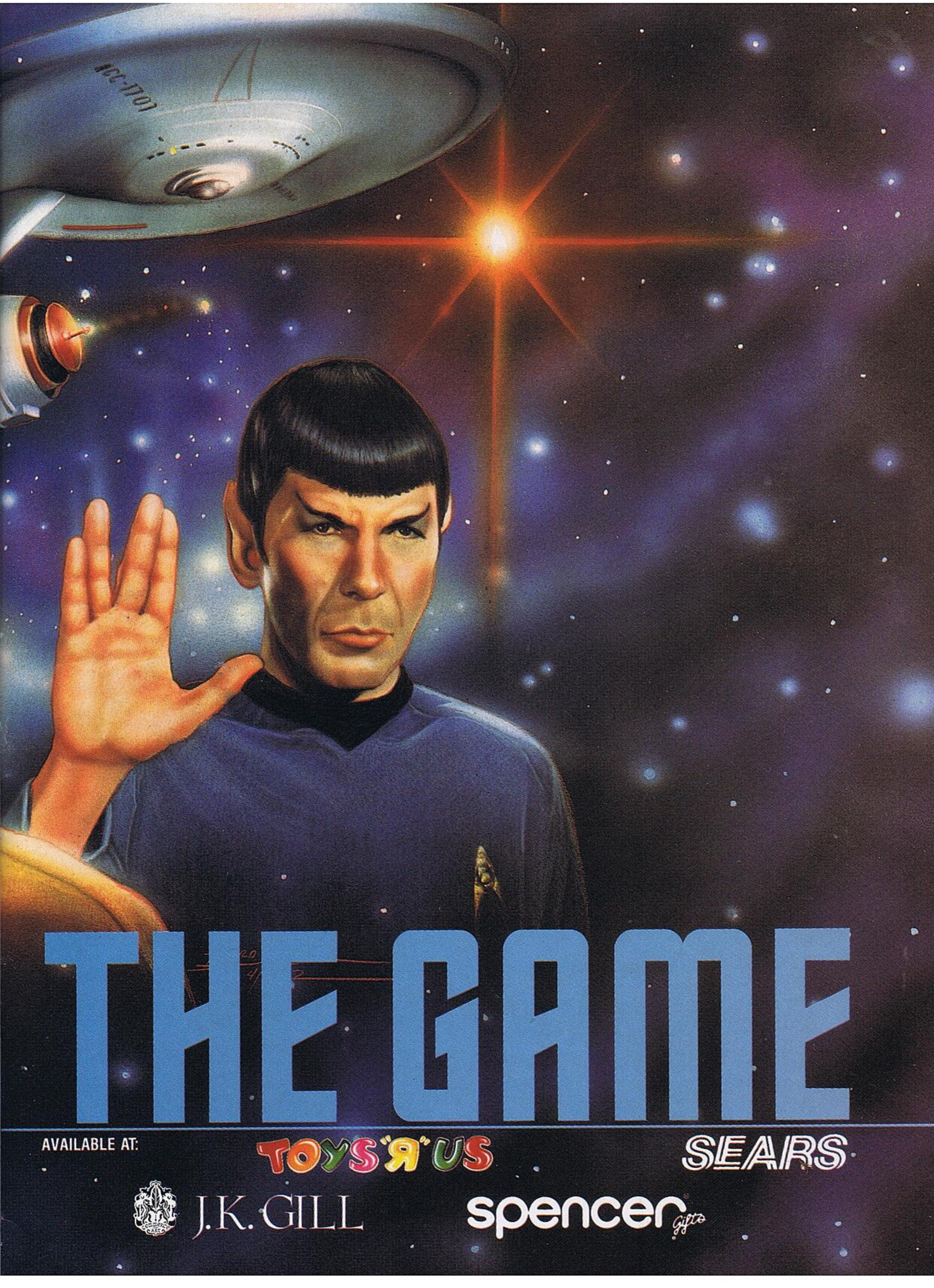
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NOVEMBER 1992

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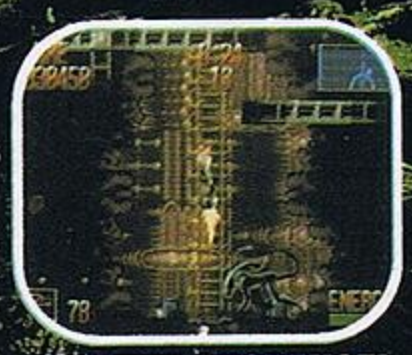
Blade Runner Photo: Copyright 1982 The Ladd Company

CAN YOU TAKE THE TERROR?

SHE'S BACK!



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MEDIALOG

MODERN PROMETHEUS RACES

After *Dracula*, what can Francis Ford Coppola do as an encore? Well, with that film due out shortly, he has *Dracula* screenwriter Jim Hart (STARLOG #174) working on another script as a possible follow-up. It's for a Coppola rendition of *Frankenstein*.

Meanwhile, Universal has had discussions with novelist Anne (*Interview with the Vampire*) Rice regarding a new version of *The Bride of Frankenstein*. *If* the project proceeds, Rice might write a *Bride* novel, a *Bride* screenplay or both.

Randy (*Martians, Go Home*) Quaid is the monster. *Robin Hood*'s Patrick Bergin (STARLOG #167) is his creator. They're teaming for yet another *Frankenstein*. That one's a TV movie for TNT.

Sequels: Ridley Scott says he's "developing" a sequel to *Blade Runner*. For more on the original film, see the section beginning on page 35.

Updates: The Sci-Fi Channel's "Nasa Watch" documentary magazine series (which focuses on space travel and related subjects) has a final name: *Inside Space*. It airs Sundays at 8:30 p.m., with rebroadcasts Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

Body Snatchers, the latest version of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, is now targeted for an early '93 release.

Solar Crisis, that long-finished SF film examined in STARLOG #169, finally has a date with theaters. Trimark has picked up theatrical rights and plans a release, more than two years after the movie's completion, in January.

The Meteor Man now touches down in March, not this Christmas.

Fantasy Films: Producer Paul Schiff is planning a remake of the classic fantasy/love story *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*.

Legendary producer Samuel Z. Arkoff has been casting about for a remake of *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. The original was produced by Herman Cohen and distributed by Arkoff's AIP. At presstime, Arkoff hadn't selected a new wolf guy, but had reaped a publicity bonanza.

Character Castings: *Back to the Future* vets Christopher Lloyd and Lea Thompson join the merriment. They'll both be coping with *Dennis the Menace* (and Walter Matthau as Mr. Wilson). Nick (*Last Starfighter*) Castle directs.

Doffing his Bat-duds, Michael Keaton portrays the very malapropistic Dogberry in actor/director Kenneth Branagh's film version of William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. Keanu (*Bill & Ted*) Reeves co-stars.

Beauty & the Beast's Roy Dotrice and June ("*V*") Chadwick are *Going to Extremes* in ABC's new offbeat drama from the *Northern Exposure* producers. Dotrice heads the foreign medical school at which Chadwick teaches. Classes are held Tuesday nights.

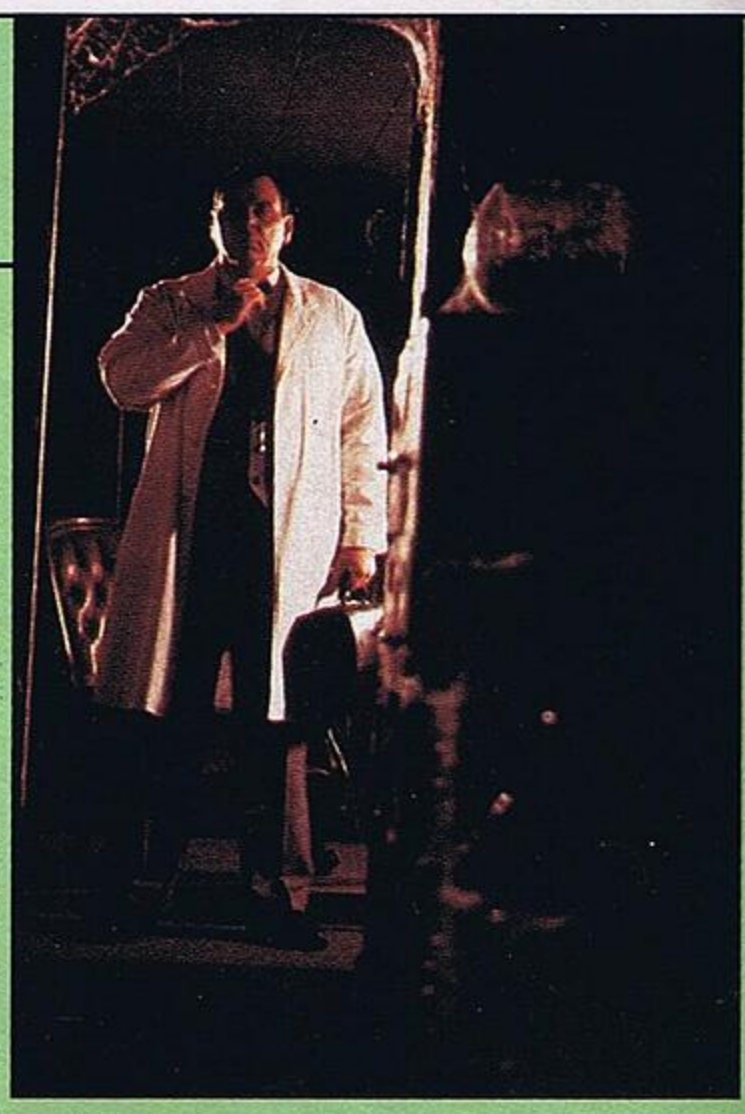
Having survived *War of the Worlds*, Adrian Paul (STARLOG #151) heads back to SF-TV for the syndicated *Highlander* series. He's the saga's new immortal, introduced in a first episode which also stars original Highlander Chris Lambert and villainous Richard Moll. The series premieres in most markets at September's end or early this month.

Tom Hanks will play *The Postman* in the film version of David Brin's after-the-apocalypse tale of mail delivery and human healing. Steve Tisch produces.

Freejack's Rene Russo, recently seen romancing Mel Gibson in *Lethal Weapon 3*, is Clint Eastwood's love interest for *In the Line of Fire*. Eastwood's a Secret Service agent tracking a possible presidential assassin (*Making Mr. Right*'s John Malkovich). Directing the film is Wolfgang (*Enemy Mine*) Petersen.

Denise Crosby has a new TV series. She's starring in Fox's *Key West*, which is shooting, naturally, in Florida.

Colm Meaney will transfer over from *The Next Generation* to *Deep Space Nine* in January. Headlining that new series are Avery (*A Man Called Hawk*) Brooks as Benjamin Sisko. Cirroc Lofton plays his



Giggles Photo: Joyce Rudolph/Copyright 1992 Universal City Studios

THE DOCTOR IS IN

Evan Rendell (Larry Drake of *Darkman*) goes a little bit crazy, pretending he's his dad, the mad doctor. Eventually, scalpel in hand, Rendell operates, bringing a true sense of heart (and humor) to his ol' hometown. After all, he's *Dr. Giggles*. Manny Coto's horror comedy—complete with *Giggles* comics from Dark Horse—opens later this month.

FILM FANTASY CALENDAR

All dates are *extremely* subject to change. Movies deemed especially tentative are denoted by asterisks. Changes are reported in "Updates."

Fall: *The Dark Half, Very Special People.*

October: *Dr. Giggles, Candyman.*

November: *Bram Stoker's Dracula*

X-Mas: *Aladdin, Thumbelina.*

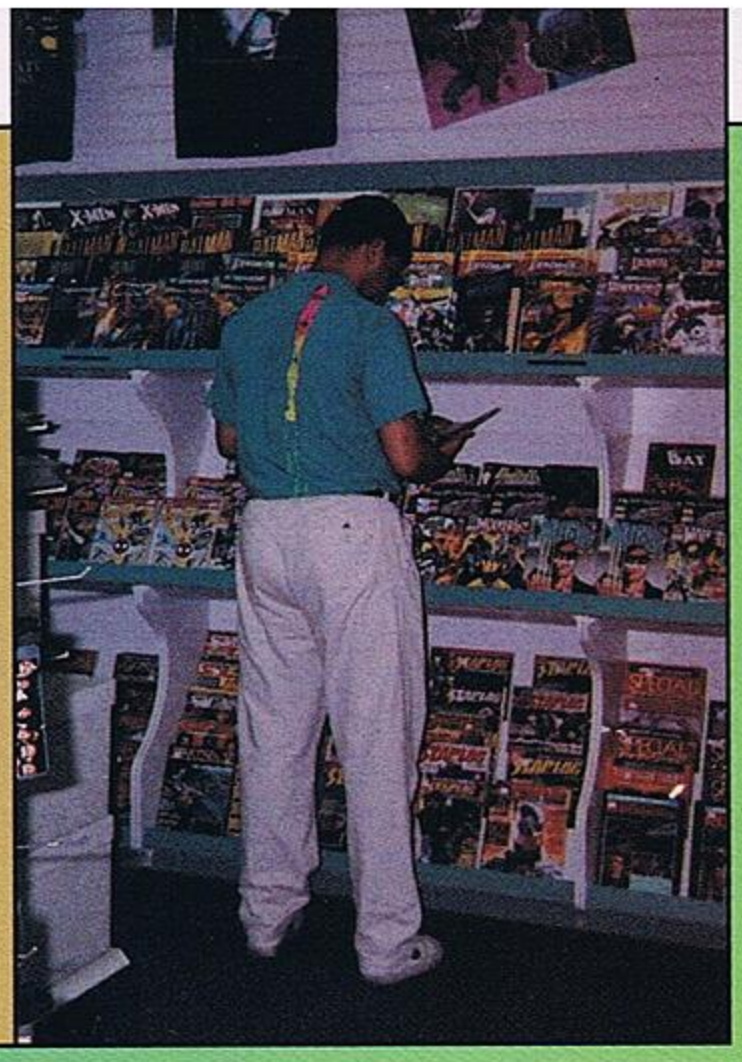
January: *Solar Crisis.*

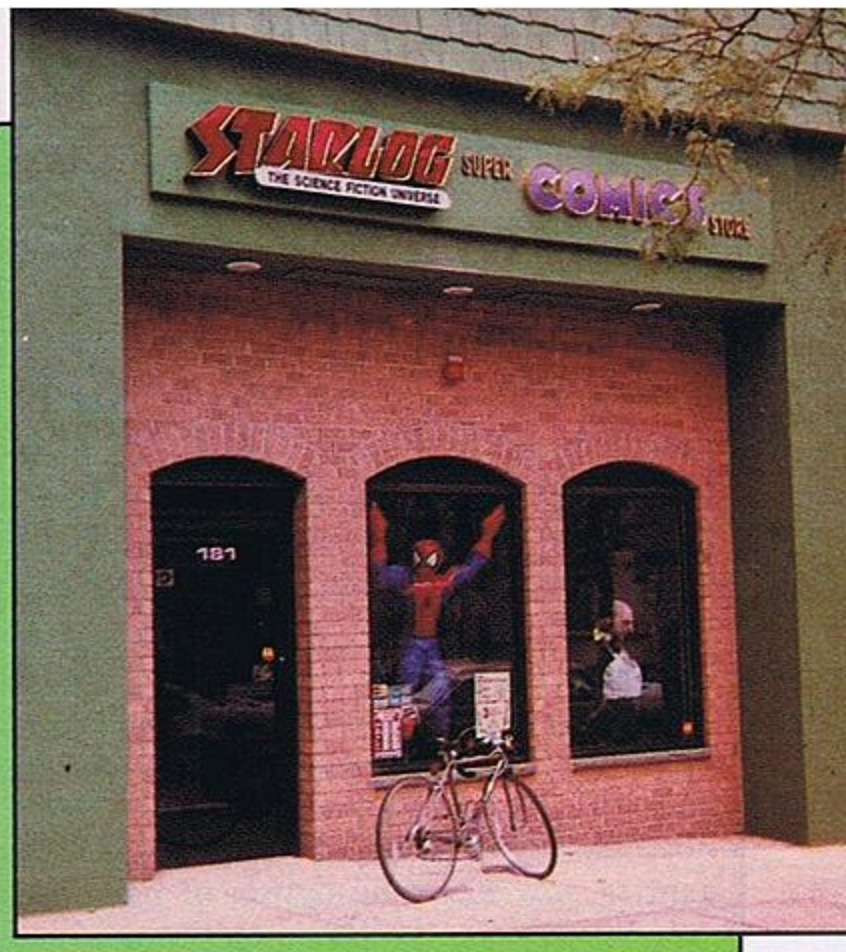
March: *The Meteor Man.*

Spring 1993: *Tom & Jerry: The Movie, A Troll in Central Park.*

Summer: *Jurassic Park, The Last Action Hero.*

X-Mas: *The Pebble and the Penguin, The King of the Jungle, Wolf.*





Photos: Courtesy Norman Jacobs

SHOPPING THE SF UNIVERSE

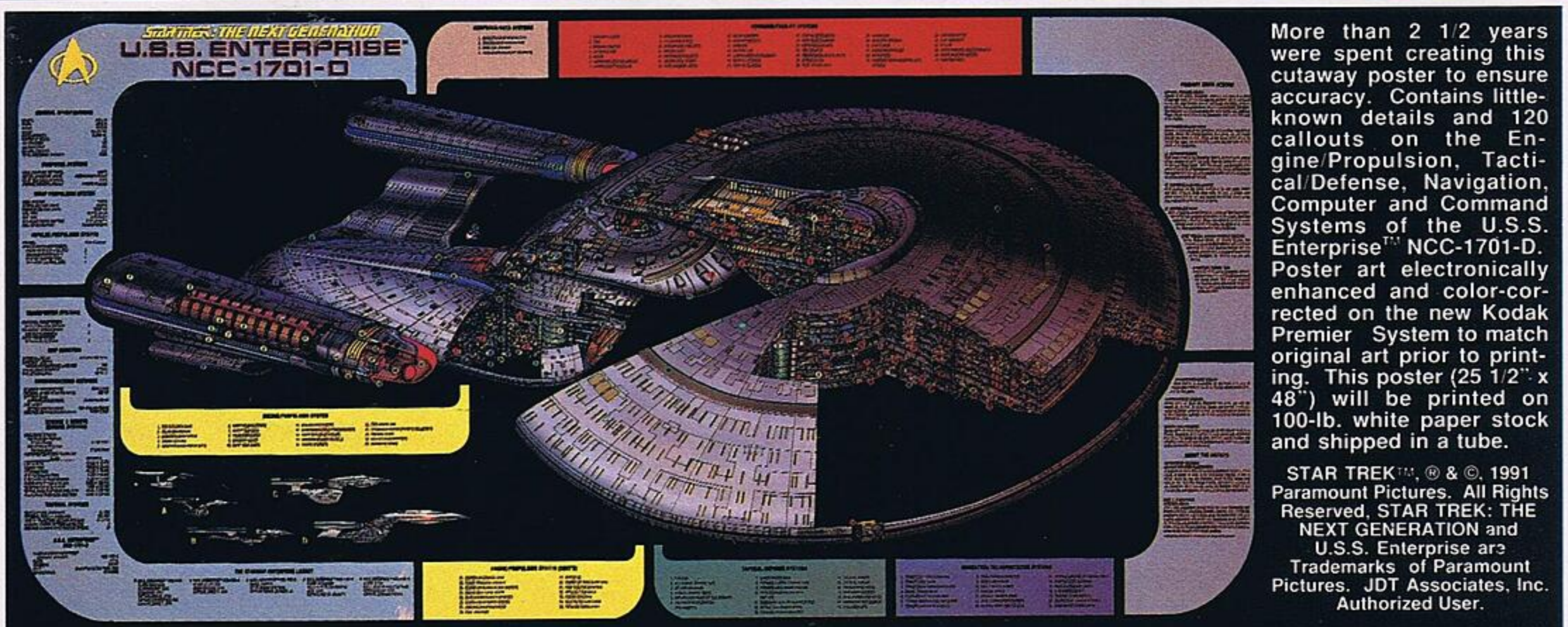
STARLOG has opened its very first retail outlet, an SF bookshop stuffed with posters, T-shirts, videos, props, trading cards, comics, toys, CDs, models, lots of nifty stuff and, of course, magazines (including an extensive selection of STARLOG, FANGORIA and COMICS SCENE back issues). The STARLOG/Comics Super Store is located at 181 E. Ridgewood Avenue, Ridgewood, NJ (across from the theater). STARLOG Publisher Norman Jacobs plans to franchise further stores in the future. For franchise info, direct correspondence to him. Meanwhile, the first STARLOG Store is open Mondays-Saturdays.

son Jake. Also in the cast are: Rene (*Benson*) Auberjonois as the shape-shifter Odo; Siddig El Fadil as Dr. Julian Bashir; Terry (*Hellraiser III*) Farrell as Jadzia Dax, a Trill; and Nana Visitor as Kira Nerys, the new Bajoran. Armin Shimerman—seen previously as two other Ferengi on *Next Generation*—plays the Ferengi bartender.

Jeff (*Starman*) Bridges plays an architect in Peter (*Witness*) Weir's *Joyride*, currently shooting. Surviving a plane crash, Bridges emerges as a heroic rescuer of fellow passengers and gets involved with another survivor (Rosie Perez of *White Men Can't Jump*). *Next Generation*'s John de Lancie—who shared a brief scene with Bridges in *The Fisher King*—plays the architect's best friend. (And yes, de Lancie *will* return as Q in an upcoming *Next Generation.*)

Meanwhile, another icon from *Star Trek* classic guest stars on an episode of *The Next Generation*. This gig may provide an Away Team member with the welcome opportunity to deliver that famed line, "Beam me up, Scotty." Of course, the guest star's James Doohan.

—David McDonnell



More than 2 1/2 years were spent creating this cutaway poster to ensure accuracy. Contains little-known details and 120 callouts on the Engine/Propulsion, Tactical/Defense, Navigation, Computer and Command Systems of the U.S.S. Enterprise™ NCC-1701-D. Poster art electronically enhanced and color-corrected on the new Kodak Premier System to match original art prior to printing. This poster (25 1/2" x 48") will be printed on 100-lb. white paper stock and shipped in a tube.

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GAMELOG

ROLEPLAYING DANGERS

Dungeons & Dragons creator Gary Gygax now offers adventure seekers a world of *Dangerous Journeys*, a multigenre roleplaying game system from Game Designers' Workshop (GDW). While most roleplaying games rely on different rules for different genres, *Dangerous Journeys* provides a core system of rules for its varying genre modules. Among its more obvious advantages, of course, is that gamers now have the option of using the same characters in different adventures and settings.

This system's first release, *Mythus* ($26), takes you to Aerth, an alternate world that thrives parallel to, albeit separately from, our own. A cultural mixture of medieval and Renaissance, Aerth is similar in many ways to Earth. Many of our fables, however, are reality on the alternate world, and where science and technology advances on Earth, magic—or Heka—reigns on Aerth.

The 416-page book separates the *Mythus* rules into two parts: Mythus Prime and Advanced Mythus. Both sets of rules, however, are very similar when creating your character, known throughout the game as your Heroic Persona (HP). To do so, you first determine your Socio-Economic Class (SEC) and a Vocation appropriate to your Class Level to provide the HP with a certain amount of beginning Knowledge/Skill (K/S) areas. These vocational K/S areas are added to the HP's selected universal and personal K/S areas, all of which are rated via STEEP (Study/Training/Education/Experience/Practice) scores.

Unlike the traditional rolling for Strength, Wisdom and so on, *Mythus* abilities are generated and assigned to the HP's Mental, Physical and Spiritual Traits. Each Trait is subdivided into two Categories, which are further broken down into Attributes of Capacity (the most important), Power and Speed. For the game's advanced rules, a difficulty rating is added.

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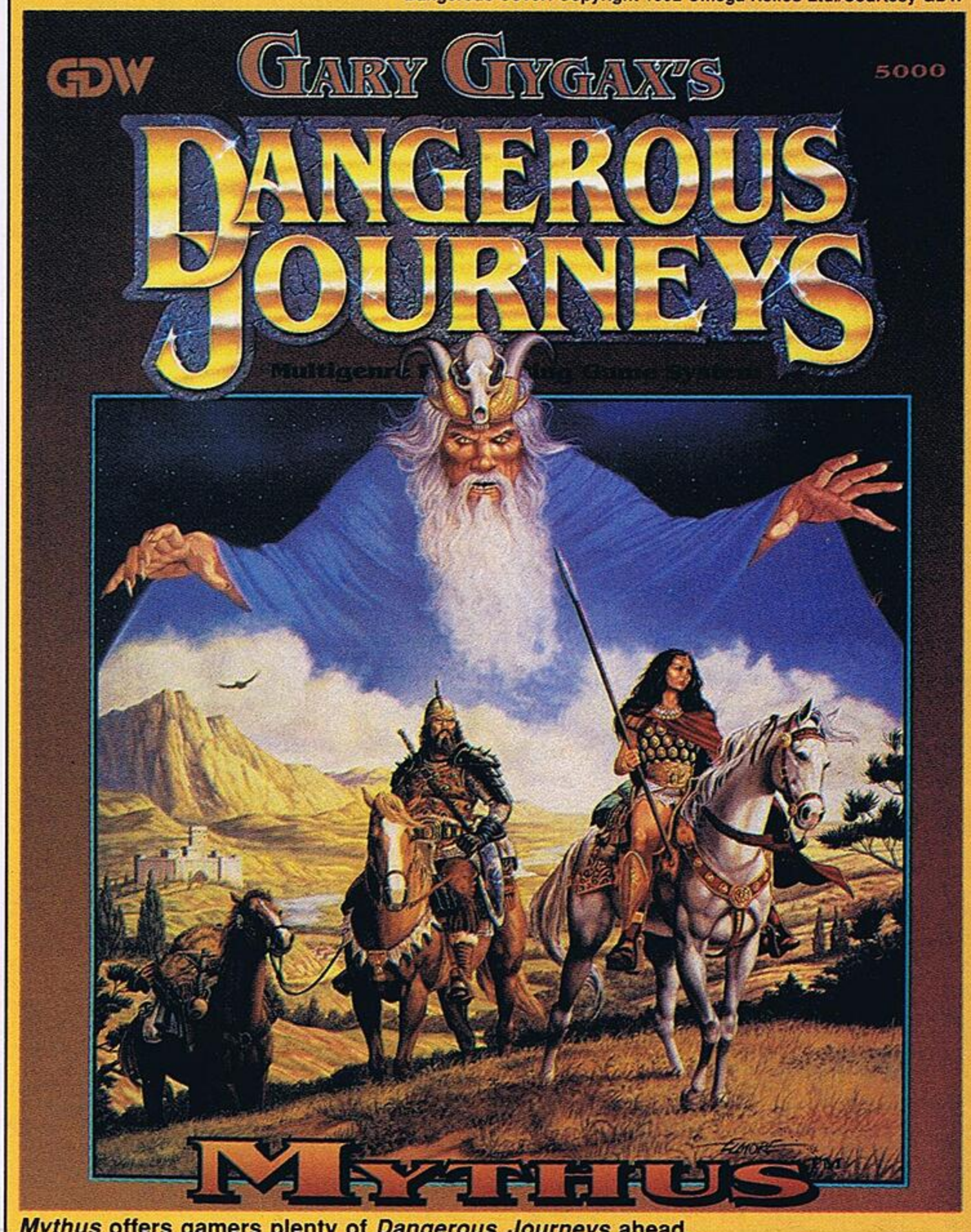


***Mythus* offers gamers plenty of *Dangerous Journeys* ahead.**

Spelljammer: Copyright 1992 TSR Inc.

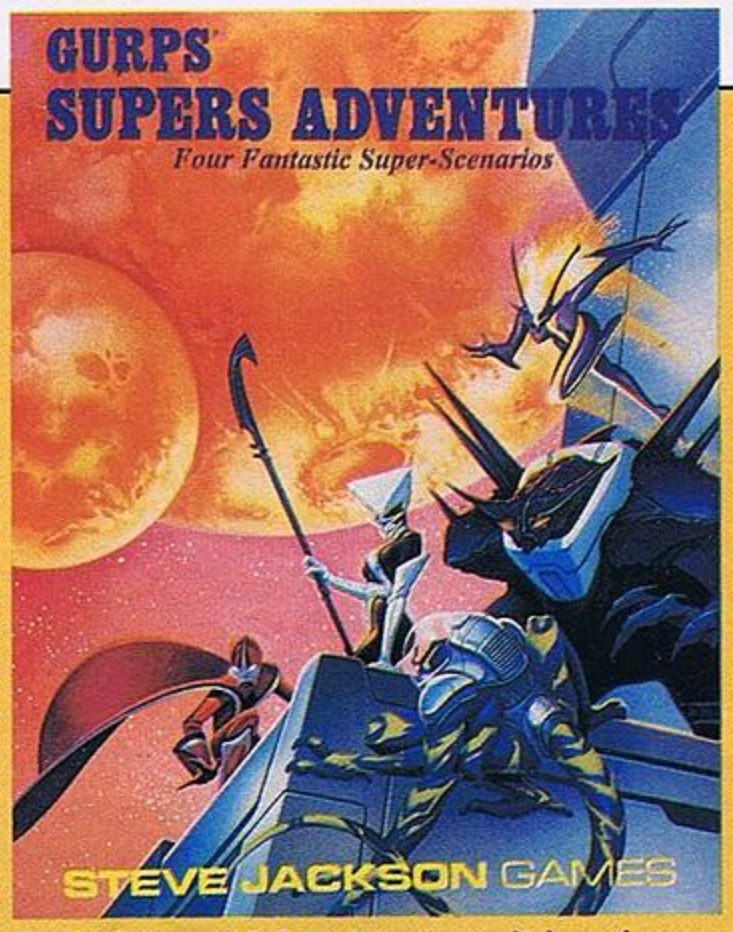
TSR's *Spelljammer War Captain's Companion* adds dimension to space warfare.

Naturally, your HP's power and skill increases with his experience. In addition to providing basic and advanced introductory campaigns, the *Mythus* book will prepare you for the series' second and third volumes: *Mythus Magick*, which features more than 1,000 spells, charms, etc.; and *The Epic of Aerth*, which lists the world and its peoples in great detail. As a matter of fact, *everything* about *Mythus* and *Dangerous Journeys* is in great detail—perhaps too much, too soon. Beginners may have some trouble absorbing everything at once, so stick with the basics a while before moving on to the advanced system.

Speaking of advanced, it's war in the *Advanced D&D Spelljammer* universe, and TSR's accommodating it with the *War Captain's Companion*. The $20 boxed set features three books which enable players of all levels to master the fine art of fantasy space combat. The first book, the *War Captain's Guide*, provides new roleplaying rules, character skills and magic items; a new section that allows players to design their own ships; and war fleet and shipyard bases for major campaign worlds.

In addition to introducing more than a dozen new ships, the *Ship Recognition Manual* updates and provides line illustrations for all existing ship types. The third book, *Combat Among the Stars*, offers not only simple ship-to-ship rules for ramming, boarding and magic use, but optional rules for 3-D movement and advanced weapons and equipment. Other set features include tactical ship rules, two 22" x 31" mapsheets, game cards and six sheets of full-color 3-D ship pieces.

If you're just plowing through one campaign after another, Steve Jackson Games may have the book that can keep you occupied for awhile: *GURPS Supers Adventures* ($16.95). The 128-page book features four different adventures set in the world of *GURPS International Super Teams*, though they can still work in any campaign world. Each adventure also in-



Supers Cover: Copyright 1992 Steve Jackson Games Inc.

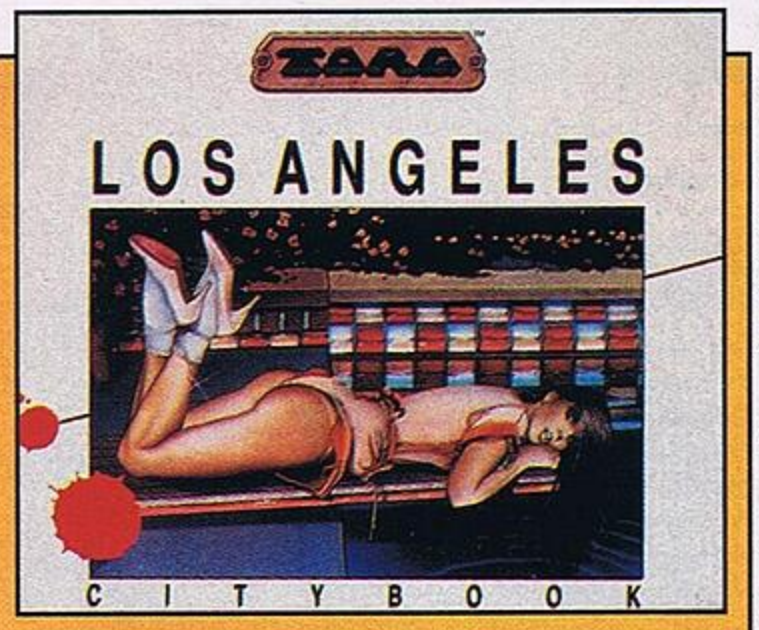
Four *Supers Adventures* await heroic roleplayers of all kinds.

cludes the maps, diagrams and background information necessary for playing.

In the first adventure, "Jupiter Blues," you and your fellow heroes must defeat Amazon's renegade supers and alien raveners to end a mining rebellion on Io, Jupiter's second moon. Two-part terror then abounds with "Mark of the Kraken," although both parts can be played independently. In part one, "The Horror Released," the heroes head towards the Greek isle of Kupros to stop the High Priest, Sea Wolf, Were and Carionette, four super-villains who have stolen a dozen tactical nuclear weapons to free an ancient evil called the Kraken from its prison. In the second part, "Project Oceanus," it's a rematch with the Kraken as you try to stop the merciless eco-terrorists known as the Green Dawn. Finally, there's "Web of the Zyrani," in which the supers' search for a missing team of scientists takes them to the high-energy planet of Zyrane.

Don't feel like planet-hopping? Then, howzabout a nice visit to the City of Angels? You'll need a guide, of course, since Los Angeles has become a City of Fallen Angels. That's why West End Games and the Storm Knights of Tempest Fugitive are more than happy to oblige with the *Los Angeles Citybook* ($18). This supplement for *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars* features everything you need to know about the city, including new maps, locations, gamemaster characters, templates and adventure hooks. You'll learn where all the local hot spots are, visit the tourist attractions and neighborhoods, and get caught in the middle of gang wars and battles between the demonic Tharkoldu and Nippon Tech. And that's not even mentioning such real-life LA horrors like earthquakes and freeway traffic jams.

The *Citybook*, designed for use by both players and gamemasters, is an immeasurable (but not required) help in Torg adventures like *City of Demons*. The Storm Knights must ally themselves with Thratchen, High Lord Regent of Orrorsh,



West End's *Los Angeles Citybook*: Don't leave home without it.

against the rogue Demon Lord Garthak, who plans a rebellion against Tharkold's High Lord, Jezrael. Defeating ninja fighters, undead ghouls and Garthak is the only way to keep the necessary deadlock between Nippon Tech and Tharkold, and to ensure Los Angeles' future. So, whether or not you use the *Citybook*, it's a sure thing that *City of Demons* will be a real riot.

—Michael McAvennie

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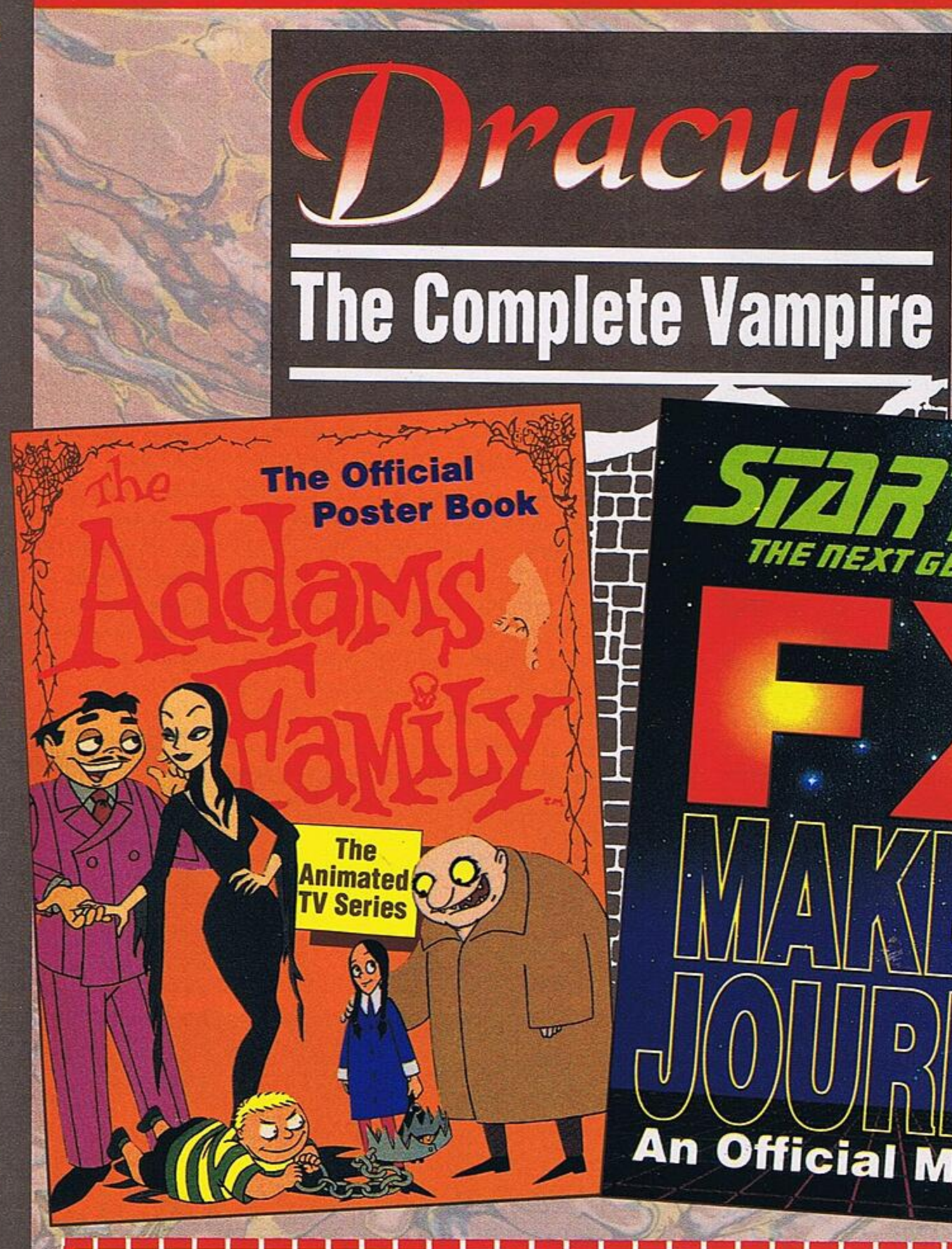

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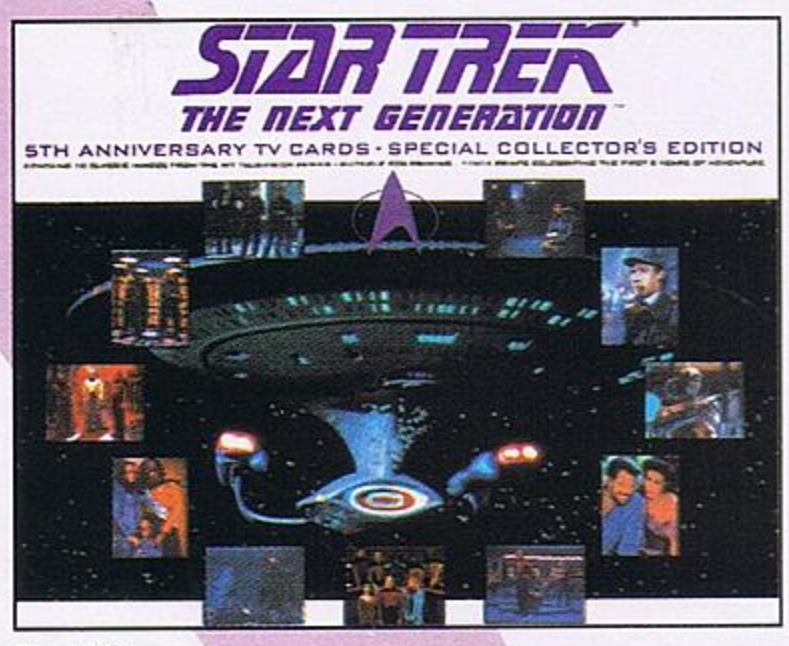

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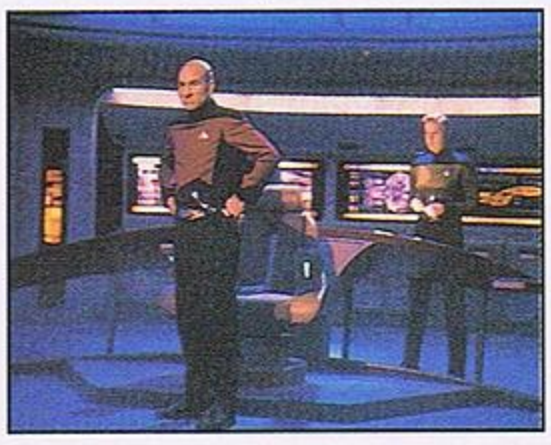

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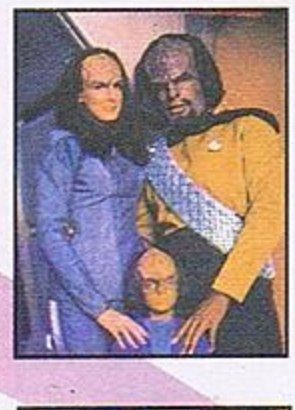

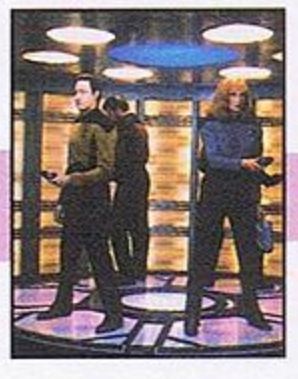

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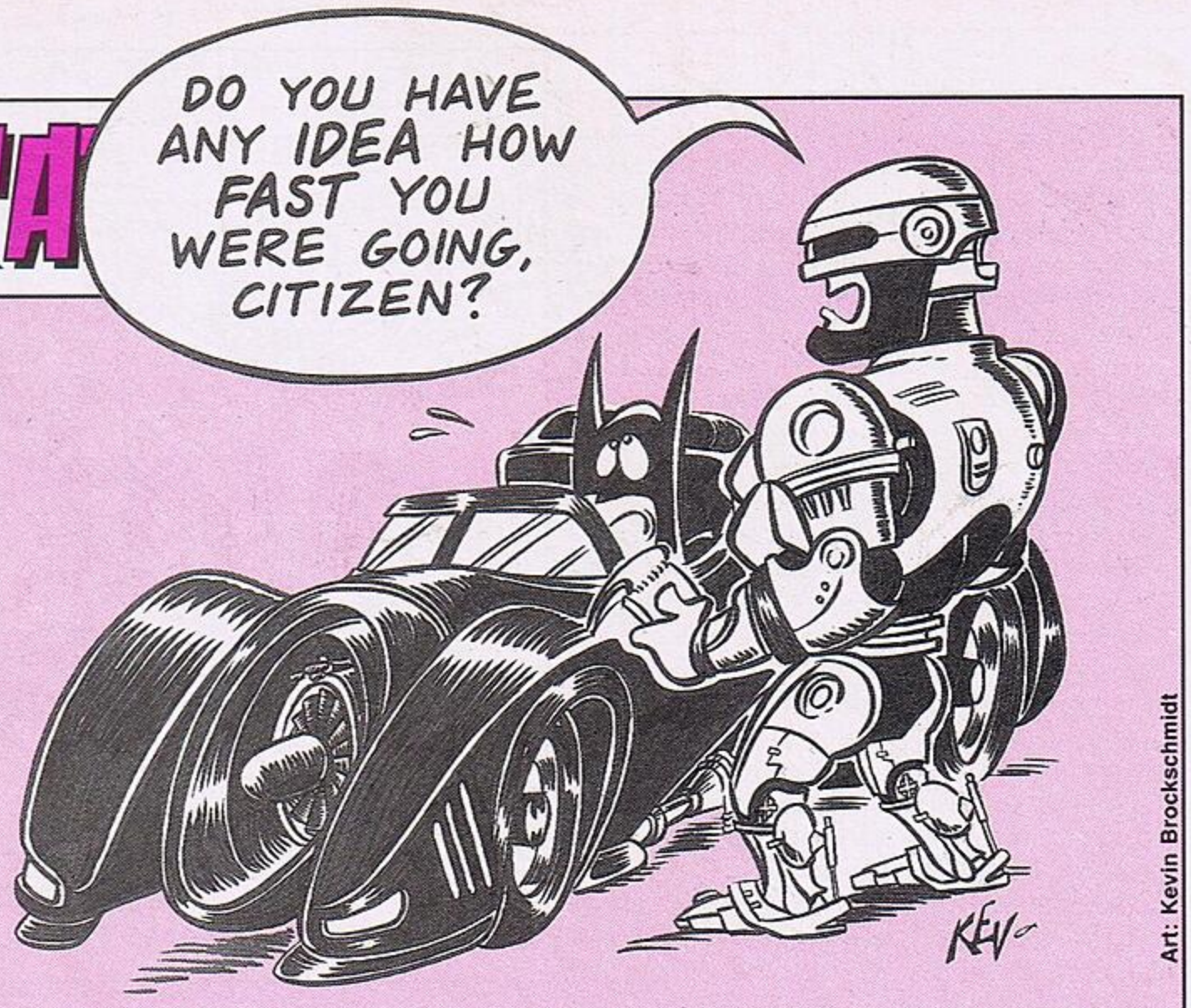

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RUSSIAN WRITES

...Hi, STARLOG! This is your Russian reader writing. I've just become a subscriber now that it is possible in Russia. Your magazine is wonderful. There are none to compare it to in this country. But despite the absence of native SF and fantasy films and magazines, we still can watch great American films on video.

Some of your material is dedicated to *Star Trek*. I've never seen an episode, so I can only judge by your articles. Thanks for your *Robin Hood* articles and *T2*. They were great. The only place I can get to read about this stuff is in your magazine.

And to all you SF and fantasy fans—I am in need of correspondence with other fans. Would you please, please write to me. I'll answer *any* letter! Just send it to:

Nick Shatoff
P.O. Box 41
630136, Novosibirsk-136
Russia

SOMETHING FISHY?

...So, John Carpenter thinks man is descended from fish. Funny, I was always taught that man came from apes. Or did the apes descend from man? I myself see no evidence that man is descended from either apes or fish. Takes as much faith to believe one thing as another.

I am afraid Carpenter will do to the *Creature from the Black Lagoon* what another producer did to *The Blob*: Ruin it by making it send an overpowering message, forgetting the story. The original *Blob* movies were fun. As I watched the 1980s' *Blob*, I felt as if it lacked something: Life. They gave *Blob* an earthly origin and brought in the government.

Now, Carpenter wants to do the Creature as a missing link between man and fish. *Fish*?

David V. Pyle
102 White River Avenue
Bicknell, IN 47512

STILL ALIENATED, ALAS

...I have been a fan of STARLOG since issue #1. Since STARLOG covers my type of movie, I thought that this would be a good place to express an opinion. Since *ALIEN*, Ripley has been a survivor and a heroine. In *ALIEN*^{3}, they at least let her keep the heroine part of her persona. This is not true of Newt.

In *ALIENS*, Newt is *definitely* a survivor, since she was able to stay alive for weeks against the *bad* guys. To just kill her off in the new movie makes it B quality. It reminded me of the *Friday the 13th* movies where the heroine would survive the whole film just to be killed off in the first few minutes of the next. I realize that the actress who played Newt, Carrie Henn, has probably grown up quite a bit, but this could have been dealt with by just placing the timeline up a few years. If *ALIEN*^{3} had followed *ALIEN*, I could have accepted it as a fair sequel. Newt, in my opinion, made *ALIENS* what it was—a fantastic movie with a great story.

ALIEN^3 is just one of those bad dreams Ripley had in hypersleep. Newt and Hicks are still alive and having a wonderful life. I think we all could have lived just fine without *ALIEN*^{3}.

Gregory Young
6313 Silverfield Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89103

...*ALIEN*^{3} is one of the worst pieces of trash I've ever seen. As a fan of the previous two *ALIEN* outings, I was downright offended by

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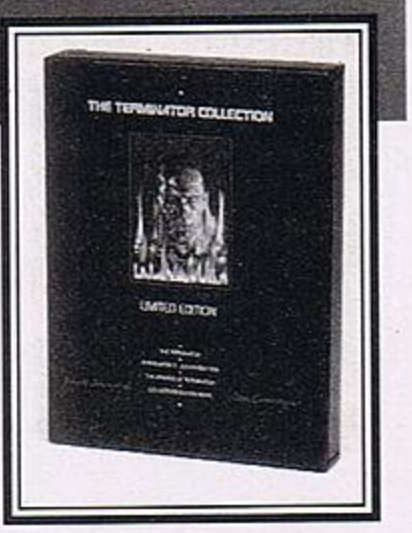

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this insult to Ridley Scott's and James Cameron's visions and the blatant attempt on behalf of the film's producers to capitalize on the success of the *ALIEN* series without any attempt to make a decent third chapter. There are so many things wrong with *ALIEN*^{3} (What's the deal with that raised *3* anyway? Is it supposed to be *ALIEN Three* or *ALIEN Cubed*?) that it could be shown in Filmmaking 101 classes across the world as an example of how *not* to make a movie.

The screenplay is a garbled mess. However, this is no surprise, considering it went through 27 writers. I also didn't like how Hicks and Newt were cheaply killed off at the film's beginning. In *ALIENS*, people grew to care about these two characters, and Ripley's reaction to their deaths was dramatically unsatisfying. The rest of the movie's plot is simply a weak repeat of the first movie. One by one, the characters are systematically stalked with surprisingly little suspense and only one extended action sequence.

Regarding music video director David Fincher, I have to question the intelligence in the decision to hire an unknown, first-time director to helm a $50 million-plus motion picture that is a sequel to two of the most popular films ever made. Fincher doesn't seem to have a clue as to how to direct a feature film. His use of low-angle shots, extreme close-ups, and cross-cutting may work fine in music videos, but these techniques lost their impact very fast on screen. In addition, Fincher doesn't seem to support the theory of starting scenes off with an establishing shot. I was very confused as to what was happening and *where* things were taking place. Fincher is also ignorant of another basic filmmaking technique; how to build suspense. I knew exactly when the Alien would strike and was never scared or surprised.

The music of Elliot Goldenthal is also no improvement over the scores by Jerry Goldsmith and James Horner. It is not only dull, but at times completely inappropriate—namely in the scene where an attempted rape is made on Ripley and rock music is played in background. Making a third sequel would be a mistake if it opted instead to repeat the formula of the first two movies without adding anything new, as this one did.

Adam Kargman
9832 N. 83rd Way
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Art: James Kester

...I'm a SF fan and I don't mind a little dab of horror, but I don't think I've ever seen so much unnecessary gore in *one* film. And what the other *ALIEN* films left to the imagination, this one didn't. The audience was even subjected to seeing the gory death of a dog! Was the autopsy scene with Newt really necessary? In a way, this movie is an imitation of the first one: One Alien against a bunch of people in a dark, desolate place. Of course, the prison was much bigger than the *Nostromo*, but it didn't seem like it. The ending expressed the futility of the whole series. Everything Ripley tried to avoid happened anyway. She was impregnated thus signaling inevitable death and *everybody* died. This movie is a virtual opposite of *ALIENS*. Where *ALIENS* was hopeful, *ALIEN*^{3} is just downright depressing.

I was very excited and open-minded about the film, thinking it would be a true sequel to *ALIENS*, thanks to the false advertising (i.e. "The Bitch is back.") They should have had the courage to advertise the movie more for what it really was. The previews made it look a lot like *ALIENS*. They even used the music from *ALIENS* in the trailer. Michael Biehn, who played Hicks, was right when he said that they would never be able to top *ALIENS*.

Eric Wemmer
12100 SW 69 Place
Miami, FL 33156

...I would like to direct my comments toward the rotten *ALIEN*^{3} story. From what I understand, there was a lot of money spent on this flop. My question is, where did it go?

Where James Cameron was meticulous in his sequel, matching every little detail, David Fincher's effort doesn't even bother. Anyone notice how different the hypersleep chambers were? They looked more like the original ones on the *Nostromo*. So, I guess we're to believe that they just magically changed from *Sulaco*-type chambers to the *Nostromo*-type. Also, in *ALIENS*, the lettering of *Sulaco* was in black. It was white in *ALIEN*^{3}. Who's going to tell us that the *ALIENS* Queen pulled out her magic paintbrush and repainted it? Fincher must think we're idiots.

And what about the *ALIEN*^{3} xenomorph? How did it get so stupid? These are very intelligent creatures. So intelligent that this one knew Ripley had a Queen inside her. But it wasn't smart enough to trap the prisoners for hosts. Nor did it have sense enough to cocoon Ripley and wait for the queen to emerge. If it was one of Cameron's Aliens, it would have waited and *then* attacked. Anyone remember that Ripley said, "They don't kill you"?

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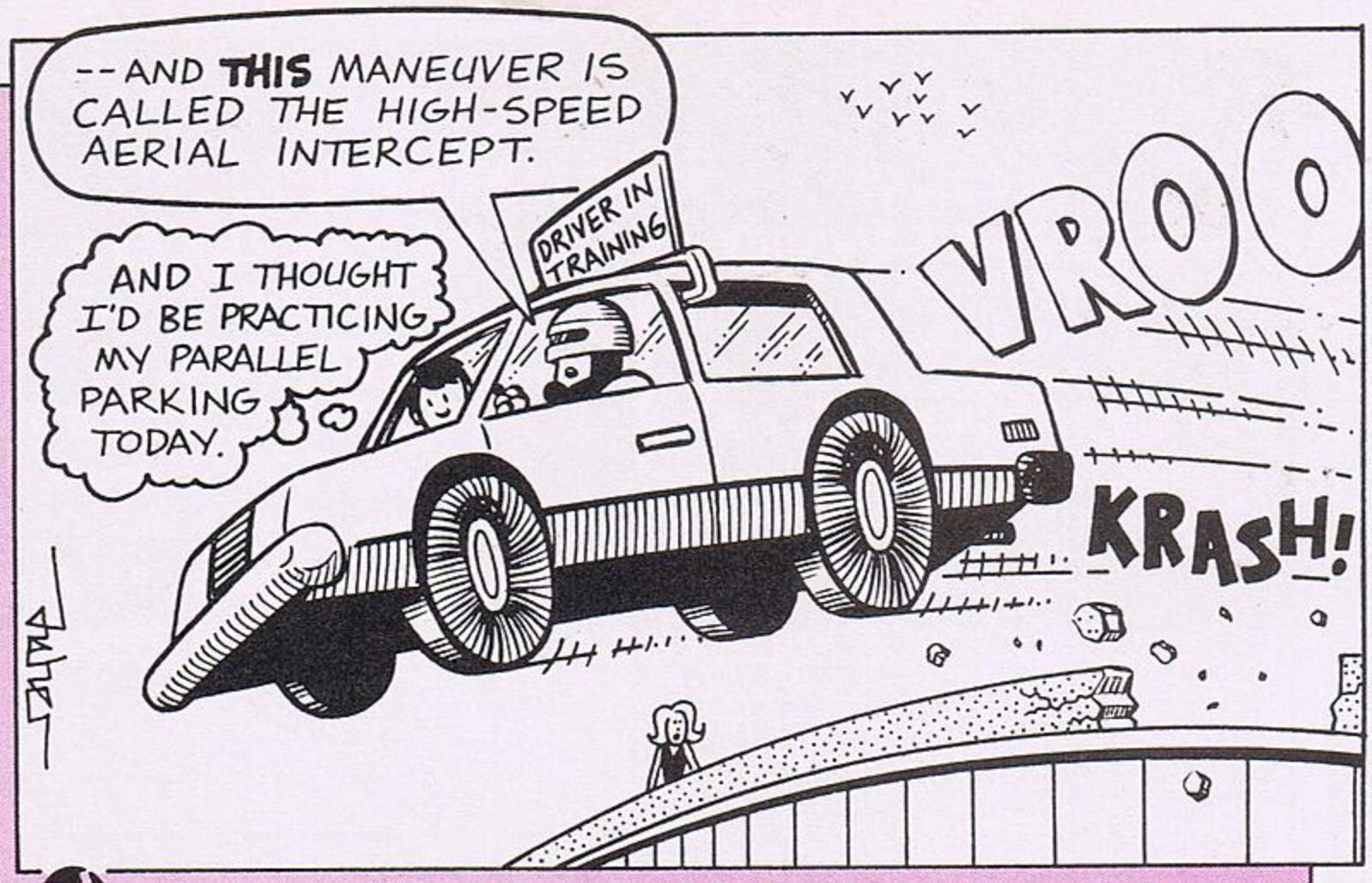
They were worried that *ALIEN*^{3} would be a tired rehash of the previous films, yet they didn't mind copying dozens of other horror movies. If I want to see Jason or Freddy, then I'll go see one of their movies. But when I go to an *ALIEN* movie, I expect to see something more creative than a monster running around killing anything that moves. I would have preferred a rehash of *ALIENS* than to sit through that "slasher in space" garbage.

To Sigourney Weaver: Your acting was terrific, but why did you accept this role? You had this "creative input," but what did you do with it? Looks like you did (as Private Hudson would say) "zippo." You should have demanded a *new* script, especially after reading about the pointless deaths of Hicks and Newt. You could have at least relented to get a decent story that would have done justice to Ripley. I guess if you give a person $5.5 million, she'll do anything, right?

Greg George
1531 Stevens Loop Road
Babson Park, FL 33827


--AND THIS MANEUVER IS CALLED THE HIGH-SPEED AERIAL INTERCEPT.
AND I THOUGHT I'D BE PRACTICING MY PARALLEL PARKING TODAY.
DRIVER IN TRAINING
VROOO
KRASH!

UNFORTUNATELY FOR TIMMY, IT WAS ROBOCOP'S TURN AS A DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLE DRIVING INSTRUCTOR.

Art: Mike Fisher

...STARLOG #179's Creature Profile featured the Aliens, and after seeing the third installment of that movie series, it would seem unlikely that an adult Alien would give itself to a facehugger, for these reasons: One, in *ALIEN*^{3}, the facehugger got the dog and created the mutant Alien seen in that film. Two, the Aliens protect their own, as seen in *ALIENS* and *ALIEN*^{3}. Three, Aliens have acid for blood, which means, of course, if a new Alien were to emerge from a older one, that emerging Alien would be wounded or destroyed by acid. This is *proven* in *ALIENS*—*all* that acid spilling around hit and wounded (or killed) other Aliens in the way, during the melee in the communications lab. The so-called "speculation" theory in that profile was unnecessary, and I believe, *wrong*.

Now, let's talk about *ALIEN*^{3}. I liked the story and the FX. The majority of the acting was solid, especially Charles Dutton, who stole every scene he was in, including those with the mutant alien. I think that Charles Dance as the doc was killed off way too early. I mean, *come on*—we just find out about his characters history, and one half-second later, the Alien breaks his arm, then yanks and rips the man's head right off the shoulders. Ripley discovered the Alien wouldn't kill her because of her being impregnated, but *why* doesn't the Alien kill the guy screaming his head off in the bed? *And* why didn't Ripley figure out that the Alien was trying to *protect* the Queen inside her by offing the good doctor? Count the seconds from when the doctor injects

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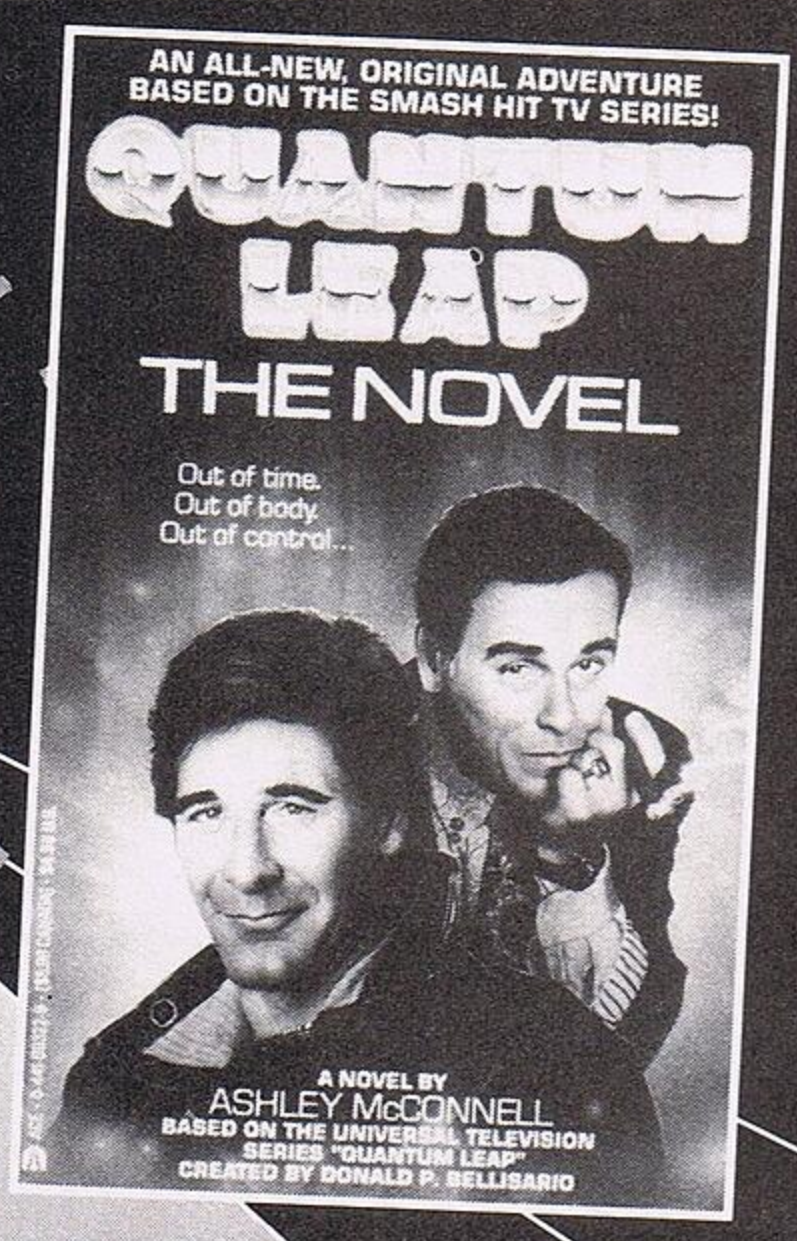
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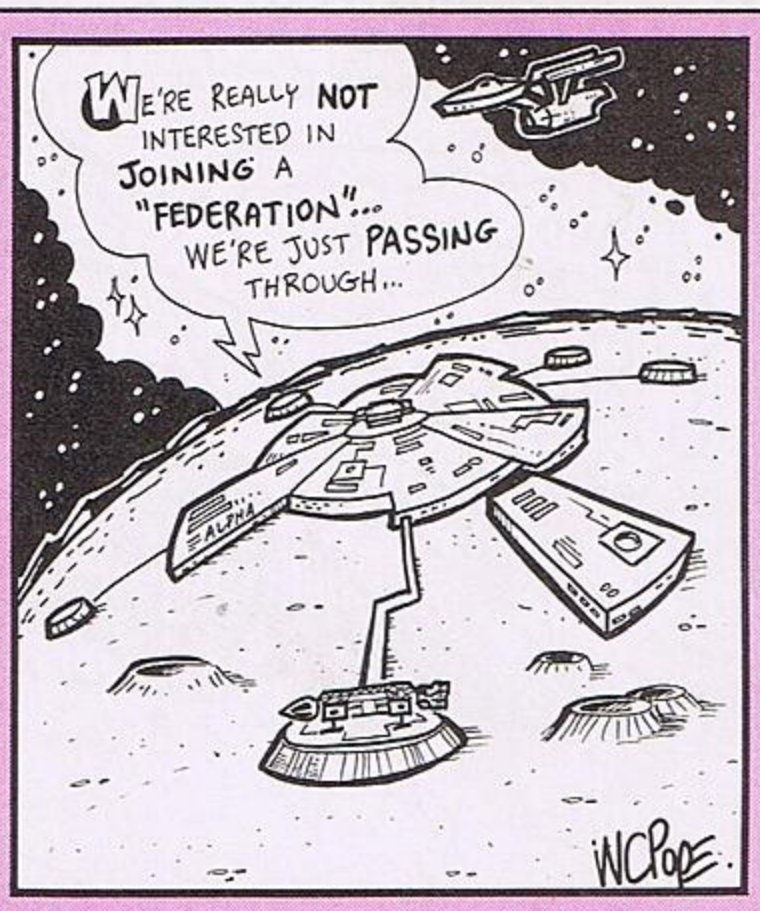
Ripley with that "solution," and how fast the Alien jumps down to the floor. Yes, no, maybe so?

I thought Newt was going to open her eyes or something, since there are many close-ups on her face. I also didn't care for the actor playing the warden—or for that matter, the character itself. And why is the human Bishop called "Bishop II" in the credits? If anything, the *android* should have been called Bishop II. Since this can of worms is opened, was there an "Ash" counterpart? And, if Bishop's personality was put in the android, why doesn't Ripley trust *him*?

The Company, as hinted, knows more about the Aliens than they let on. I think the shooting of the prisoner was unnecessary. What weapon does he have? A crowbar? Lance Henriksen did a great job, but he should have had a bigger role. I think Ripley believed him too, but she knew that the Alien Queen would emerge from her in the next minute, so she took the Nestea Plunge. Problem there is, when the Alien *does* emerge, death should have come in that second, and Ripley wouldn't be able to hold on to it. And if she didn't hang on to the Alien, where would it go? It had only a fraction of a second before it got toasted with its host.



Art: W.C. Pope

While I liked the FX, I didn't care for the endless P.O.V. shots. The old sneak-up gag has since been a cliché, and as for the running Alien P.O.V. shots, I almost half-expected Bruce Campbell to come running out with a chainsaw for a hand from *Evil Dead II*.

Darren J. Seeley
Address Withheld

...I am floored after seeing *ALIEN*^{3}. I could not believe how much a change of director could terminate a good storyline. Having read STARLOG #179, and looking over the storyboards presented there, I expected more from this movie—*so* much more. I think the story would have been more interesting with the survival of Hicks and Newt; it seems as if their characters were killed in an effort to save money.

I would like to make a personal plea to James Cameron, to save the *ALIENS* storyline which looked so promising after the first two movies.

John Kraemer
785 Linden Road
Toms River, NJ 08753

...That Ripley bites the big one at the end doesn't mean that the saga of the huge bi-ped bug is over. There are at least four or five more good stories left in the *ALIEN* saga.

Now that Sigourney Weaver is out of the way, 20th Century Fox can get back to the business of making a good science fiction thriller. They could hire talent with lower wages and put more into the production itself. More money could go back into creature and set design. They could start to work on the how, when and why of the Aliens. They could work with possibilities not explored before.

Where did they come from? What was the derelict doing on that planet? How did the Aliens come into being? Were they brought to the planet or were they indigenous to the planet? What do they do when not looking for food and/or hosts? Are they intelligent in any way other than obvious? If so, what type of technology can they develop, if any? Do they copy technology? Are they capable of learning? What other sects do they develop from? Father, warrior, queen, drone? What other sects are there? Could be others not yet explored yet? How can they eat so much and not affect their own mass? Or does it? And if Ash (the synthetic person in *ALIEN*) was right, do they go through another metamorphosis *after* the bi-pedal phase?

ALIEN^3 brought up the new concept of DNA and genetic copying. The Alien somewhat took the shape of the dog and some characteristics. It ran on all fours. It used its tail more. When it emerged from the dog, it was already on all fours and seemed more comfortable that way. It didn't go through the lizard-like metamorphosis. The Queen that emerged from Ripley's chest did.

If an Alien is incubated in a winged life form, does it copy the wings from the DNA and create wings? Will new Alien forms fly?

And what about the Queen in *ALIENS*? All life forms I know of can't reproduce without any outside fertilization. That the Queen was already laying eggs gives fact that she was fertilized. When Ripley was underneath the Queen, two warriors started to come forward. The Queen looked at them and they melted back into the shadows. Does that mean that they communicate with each other?

Hopefully, 20th Century Fox is also asking questions and will come up with answers and soon. They could also keep their promise and have an Alien invasion of Earth.

Torin Sinclair
Address Withheld

A CREATURE PROFILE

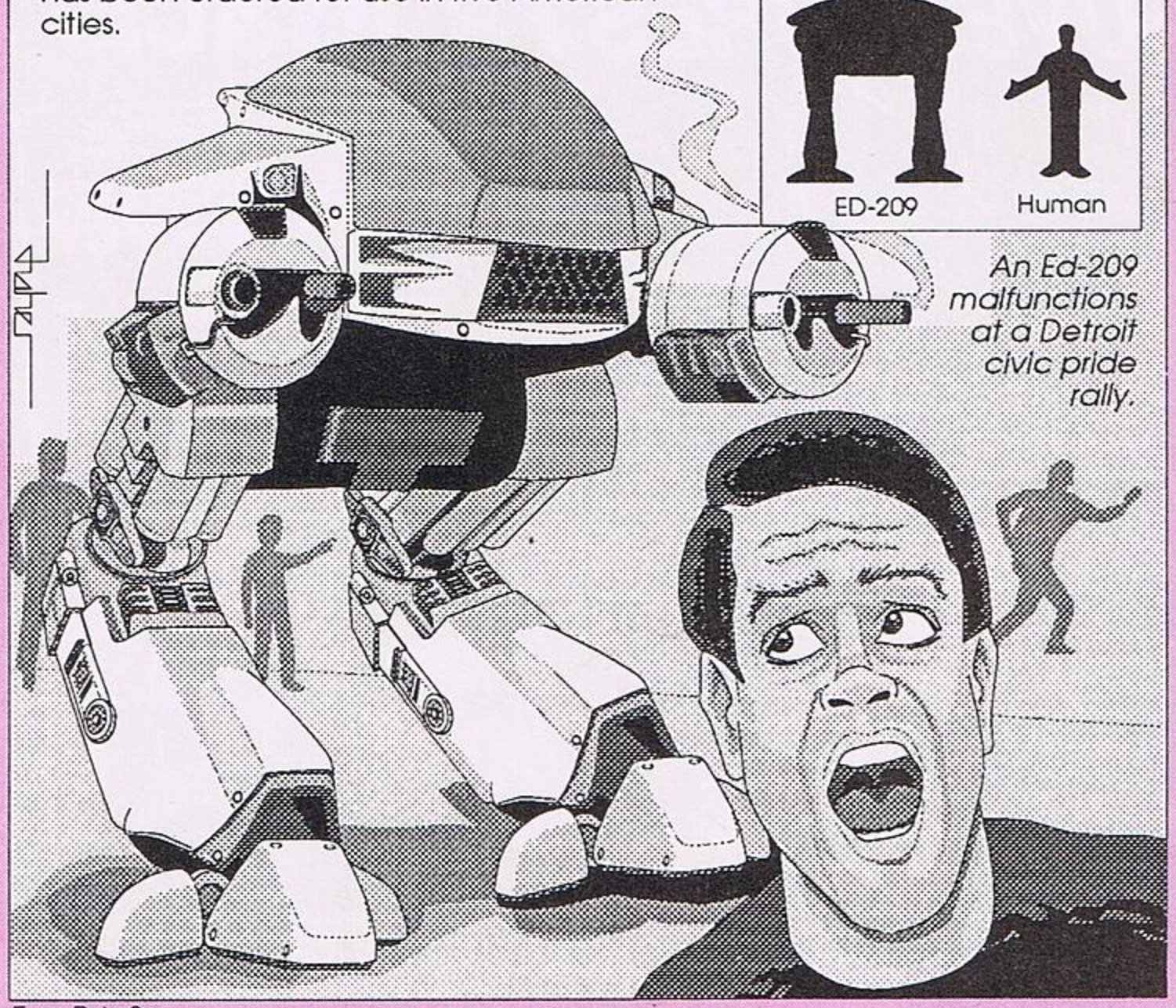
ED-209!

Origin: Built by OCP, Omni Consumer Products. The ED (Enforcement Droid)-209 project was sponsored by OCP executive Dick Jones.

Purpose: Built to be an automated, 24-hour police officer with superior firepower for Detroit. Equipped with high power machine guns and missiles. Eventually, to be sold to the military.

Status: Despite multiple malfunctions, including killing an OCP executive at its own unveiling, has been ordered for use in five American cities.

Size comparison



An Ed-209 malfunctions at a Detroit civic pride rally.

Art: Mike Fisher

From RoboCop

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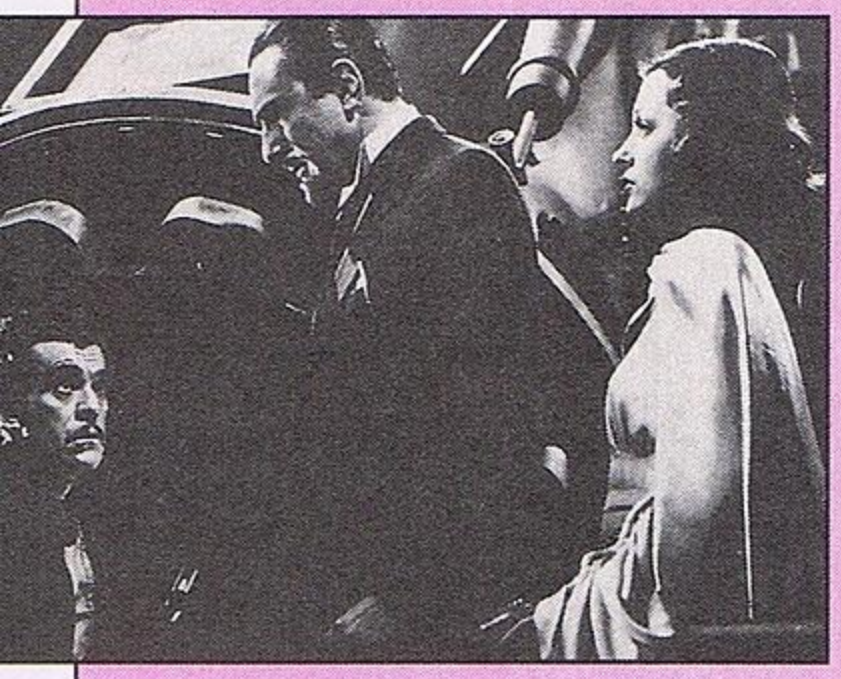
VIDEOLOG

The Invisible Man Returns **on video—with Vincent Price under the bandages.**

Photos: Copyright 1992 Universal City Studios

GHOSTS & GOBLINS

Treasures of the Twilight Zone is a double-cassette edition for collectors that includes six complete episodes and many rare and interesting treats from, of and about Rod Serling's immortal series *The Twilight Zone*. Included in the package are: The historic 10/2/59 premiere episode, "Where Is Everybody?"; two long-sought-after episodes that haven't been broadcast in many years, "The Encounter" and "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge;" and three other classics, "Eye of the Beholder," "The Masks" and "The Howling Man." The bonus goodies in this edition include a vintage interview between Mike Wallace and Serling from 1959, a 10-minute promotional sales film, hosted by Serling, originally designed to attract sponsors and several original on-air promos. This entire Halloween package is priced at a delicious $29.98 in VHS.



Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi test *The Invisible Ray* out on video.

Two Valley kids unearth a frozen caveman while excavating a backyard swimming pool in *Encino Man* from Hollywood Pictures. After Link is thawed out and cleaned up, they take him to school, where he's a big hit on campus—elevating the social status of the two Valley outcasts who dug him up one afternoon. Available in VHS and Beta HiFi stereo, *Encino Man* is priced for rental.

Eartha Kitt teams up with Jim Varney in the Touchstone Pictures production *Ernest Scared Stupid*, a Halloween fest featuring trolls on the loose in a Tennessee town. Well-known creature FX designers Charles, Stephen and Edward Chiodo were responsible for the Trantor, the star troll, as well as his hosts of minions and the many buckets of ultra-slime. *Ernest Scared Stupid* is priced for rental in VHS and Beta HiFi surround sound.

On the cheap side, you should be able to fill your own trick-or-treat bag with titles that have been recently reduced to low sell-through prices. Look for: *Bride of Re-Animator, Fright Night Part II, The Monster Squad* and *An American Werewolf in London*, all at $14.98 in VHS. From New Line Cinema, *The Princess Bride* and *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* have been slashed to $19.95 in VHS.

Peter Cushing will offer to tell your fortune in *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*, now on Republic Pictures Home Video. It's priced at an unbelievable $9.98 in VHS. This 1965 classic directed by Freddie Francis also stars Christopher Lee, Donald Sutherland and Bernard Lee.

Cushing operates again as Dr. Frankenstein in a new laserdisc from MCA/Universal Home Video. *The Evil of Frankenstein* has the good doctor returning to his remote mountain castle to discover that his original creature is frozen in ice. This CLV disc ($34.98) has chapter stops for key scenes and digital sound.

MCA/Universal has garnered a spine-tingling collection of 17 titles all attractively marked at $19.98 in VHS Three new headliners top off the group: Hammer Films' spooky *Brides of Dracula* with Peter Cushing (as Van Helsing this time), Ray Milland in the ghostly murder mystery *The Uninvited* and James Cagney as the great Lon Chaney in *Man of a Thousand Faces*. Rounding out the collection are: *Cat People, Curse of the Werewolf, Dr. Cyclops, The Incredible Shrinking Man, The Invisible Ray, Prince of Darkness* and others.

A special Monsters Collection from MCA/Universal is marked even lower. You can find *Dracula's Daughter, House of Frankenstein* with Boris Karloff, *The Invisible Man Returns, The Mummy's Hand, Tower of London* with Basil Rathbone, Vincent Price and Karloff, *Werewolf of London, The Black Cat, The Raven* and many more, all at a shocking $14.98 each.

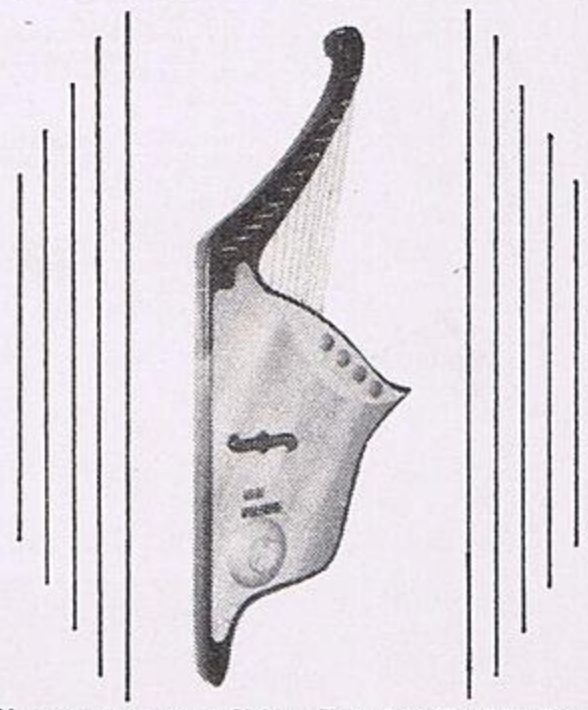
The eerie menace of a firebug on the loose is explosively depicted in *Backdraft*, from director Ron Howard. The highlight is the super-spectacular special FX from ILM. William Baldwin and Kurt Russell star, with a creepy cameo by Donald Sutherland. *Backdraft*, now $19.98, is a VHS HiFi stereo surround sound epic.

On a lighter note, Hanna-Barbera's animated *Addams Family* is out on six 30-minute VHS cassettes at $9.98 each.

Next month, FoxVideo will be filling your dealer's shelves with deluxe leatherette gift boxes filled with the widescreen editions of the *Star Wars* trilogy. Though widescreen has been the format of choice for laserdisc users for some time, it's relatively uncommon in videocassette form. The *Star Wars* three-film package is something of a test to see how ready tape users are to accept non pan-and-scan versions of widescreen films. In addition to widescreen versions of the three Lucasfilm epics, the gift box contains a hardcover book, a "making of" cassette and a collector's hologram.

—David Hutchison

STAR TREK
VULCAN HARP



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SANTA ROSA EL RANCHO	11/20-22/92	JAMES DOOHAN
LAS VEGAS ALADDIN HOTEL	11/21-22/92	GRACE LEE WHITNEY
AUSTIN HYATT REGENCY	11/28-29/92	TO BE ANNOUNCED
CINCINNATTI DRAWBRIDGE INN	1/2-3/93	TO BE ANNOUNCED
CHICAGO HOLIDAY INN AIRPORT	1/2-3/93	TO BE ANNOUNCED
PORTLAND HOLIDAY INN AIRPORT	1/9-10/93	TO BE ANNOUNCED
PITTSBURGH SHERATON STATION SQUARE	1/9-10/93	TO BE ANNOUNCED

TICKETMASTER*

*Ticketmaster has service charges.

TICKETS: general admission and preferred seating tickets are available at TICKETMASTER* OUTLETS for all events 5 weeks prior to convention dates. For more information send a self addressed stamped envelope to CREATION, 530 RIVERDALE DRIVE, GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA 91204 (One envelope per convention request, please). Preferred Seating is also available by calling CREATION at (818) 409-0960** during business hours Pacific Time.

CREATION entertainment

**There is a $2 service charge per ticket for tickets ordered through this number.

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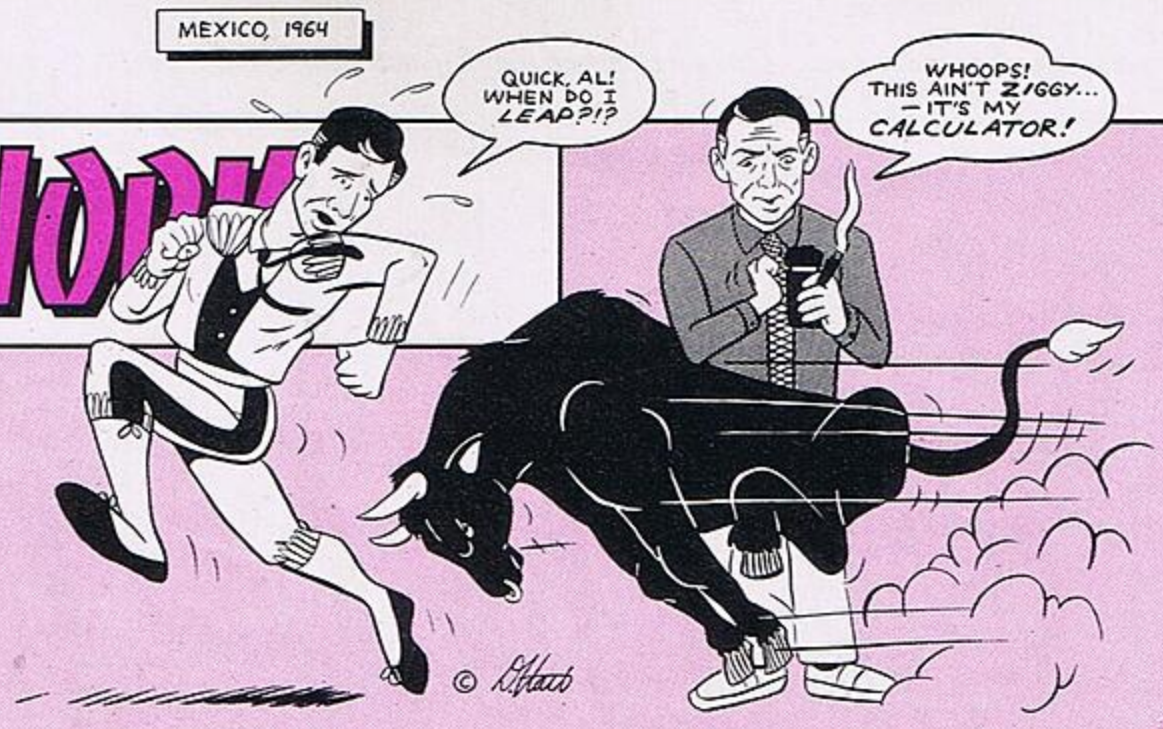

Art: Doug Hart

SF Directory
Assembled by LIA PELOSI

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FAN CLUBS & PUBLICATIONS

ELISABETH SLADEN INFORMATION NETWORK
A club for fans of *Doctor Who* and the actress.
Sanctioning: None.
Address: Elisabeth Sladen
Information Network
c/o Kevin W. Parker
3-E Ridge Road
Greenbelt, MD 20770
Dues: $20 (US). $30 (overseas) US funds.
Membership includes: Fourteen issues of quarterly newsletter (includes all back issues); official membership button, access to video, photo and other offers.

PEN PAL CLUB
An international pen pal club that will match you and a "pen pal" with the same interests. Send your name, address and interests.
Sanctioning: None.
Address: Michael Lauzon
475 Iroquois Shore Road
Oakville, Ontario
Canada L6H 1M3
Dues: $5 (Canada). $10 (US). $15 (foreign). These rates are to join, double the price for each pen pal you want. Canadian funds only.
Membership includes: Your pen pal's address.

QUANTUM LEAP/BEAUTY & THE BEAST INFORMATION OUTLET
Sanctioning: None.
Address: Intertwined
P.O. Box 49
Savoy, IL 61874
Dues: None, information is free. Send large SASE with two 29¢ stamps.
Membership includes: This is *not* a club. We offer free information on fan clubs, merchandise & fan-produced merchandise. Please state which show you want the information on, one or both.

STAR TREK CLUBS & PUBLICATIONS

THE BOSTON STAR TREK ASSOCIATION, INC.
The oldest *Trek* association in America.
Sanctioning: None.
Address: The Boston *Star Trek* Association
P.O. Box 1108
Boston, MA 02103-1108
(617) 894-2872
Dues: Send SASE for information.

U.S.S. REGULUS NCC-1840
A non-profit *Star Trek* club with an emphasis on general fantasy and SF.
Sanctioning: None.
Address: Starbase Regulus
P.O. Box 92
Pillager, MN 56473-0092

CONVENTIONS

Questions about cons listed? Please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address listed for the con. Do **NOT** call STARLOG. *Conventioneers*: Send all pertinent info no later than *5 months prior* to event to STARLOG Con Calendar, 475 Park Ave. South, NY, NY 10016. STARLOG makes *no* guarantees, due to space limitations, that your con *will* be listed here. This is a *free* service; to *ensure* a listing in STARLOG—*not here* but elsewhere—contact JoAnne Sanabria (212-689-2830) for classified ad rates & *advertise* there.

OCTOBER

ROVACON 17
October 2-4
Salem Civic Center
Salem, VA
RoVa Con
P.O. Box 117
Salem, VA 24153
(703) 389-9400
Guests: George Takei, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Yvonne Craig, John Gardner, Forry Ackerman, Hal Clement, Deanna Lund

CON-CHORD 8
October 2-4
Holiday Inn-LAX
Los Angeles, CA
Con-Chord 8
c/o Rick Weiss
13261 Donegal Drive
Garden Grove, CA 92644-2304
(714) 530-3546

CONTRADICTION TWELVE
October 2-4
Radisson Hotel
Niagara Falls, NY
Contradiction
P.O. Box 2043
Newmarket Station
Niagara Falls, NY 14301
Guest: C.J. Cherryh

BOUCHERCON XXIII WORLD MYSTERY CON
October 8-11
The Royal York Hotel
Toronto, Ontario
BoucherCon XXIII
P.O. Box 23
Station "S"
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M5M 4L6
Guest: Mary Higgins Clark, Robert Campbell, Elizabeth Peters

OKTOBERTREK '92
October 9-11
Hunt Valley, MD
OktoberTrek 92
6656 Aspern Drive
Elkridge, MD 21227
(410) 379-6930
Guests: DeForest Kelley, Brent Spiner, Marc Okrand, Howard Weinstein

NECRONOMICON
October 9-11
Holiday Inn Airport
Tampa, FL
Necronomicon '92
P.O. Box 2076
Riverview, FL 33569
(813) 677-6347
Guests: James P. Hogan, Glen Cook

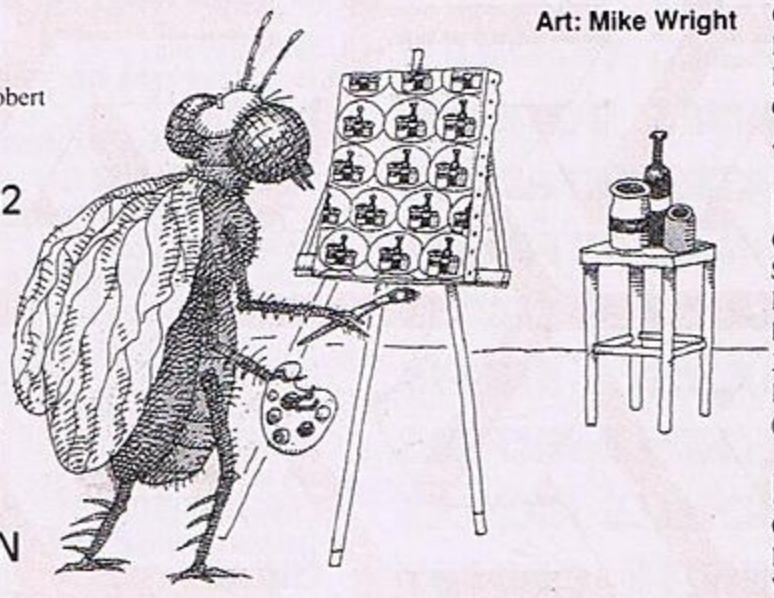
SPYCON 8
October 9-11
The Quality Hotel
Palatine, IL
SpyCon
P.O. Box 8403
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

CONFEDERATION
October 9-12
Holiday Inn, Leicester
England
Fiona Barrowclough
129 Westfield Road
Wellingborough
Nothants NN8 3HN
England
Guests: George Takei, John de Lancie, Grace Lee Whitney

CREATION
October 10-11
Skyline Hotel
Toronto, Ontario
Creation Entertainment
530 Riverdale Drive
Glendale, CA 91204
(818) 409-0960
Guest: Jonathan Frakes

DREAMWERKS
October 17-18
Ramada Harrisburg
New Cumberland, PA
Dreamwerks
Box 3273
Boca Raton, FL 33427
(407) 488-2822
Guests: Michelle Forbes, David McDonnell

Art: Mike Wright



HOLLYWOOD MECHANICAL HORROR
October 10-11
Meadowlands Convention Center
Secaucus, NJ
Scarpa Productions Inc.
P.O. Box 1052
Kearny, NJ 07032
(201) 991-5490

CON*CEPT '92
October 17-18
Ramada Renaissance Hotel du Parc
Montreal, Canada
Con*Cept '92
P.O. Box 405, Station H
Montreal, Quebec
Canada H3G 2L1
(514) 453-9455
Guests: Roger Zelazny, Gregory Benford, Larry Stewart, Donald Kingsbury, Baird Searles

CREATION
October 17-18
Coast Terrace Inn
Edmonton
Creation Entertainment
530 Riverdale Drive
Glendale, CA 91204
(818) 409-0960

CREATION
October 17-18
Radisson Hotel
Buffalo, NY
Creation Entertainment
Address above

FANTASTICON 6
October 18
Sheraton Inn, Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI
FantastiCon 6
3368 N. 51st Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53216
(414) 871-1502

DREAMWERKS
October 24-25
Irem Temple
Wilkes Barre, PA
Dreamwerks
Box 3273
Boca Raton, FL 33427
(407) 488-2822
Guests: Michael Dorn, Suzie Plakson

FANGORIA WEEKEND OF HORRORS HALLOWEEN
October 31-November 1
Odeum Sports & Expo Center
Villa Park, IL
Creation/Fango
530 Riverside Drive
Glendale, CA 91204
Guests: Doug Bradley, Kane Hodder, Don ("The Shape") Shanks, Sam Raimi, Bruce Campbell

MAPLECON 13
October 30-November 1
Chimo Hotel
Ottawa, Canada
MapleCon 13
P.O. Box 20235
390 Rideau Street E.
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1N 9P4
Guest: Gabriel Morrissette

DREAMWERKS
October 31-November 1
St. Louis Airport Hilton
St. Louis, MO
Dreamwerks
Address above
Guests: Leonard Nimoy, Andreas Katsulas

WHO'S SEVEN
October 30-November 1
Telford Moat House Hotel
Telford Shropshire, England
Henry Eggleton
137 High Street
Plaistow, Broadway
London E13 9HH
England

WEEKEND OF THE VAMPIRE
October 31-November 1
Holiday Inn, Plantation
Plantation, FL
Luminations of South Florida
1323 S. State Road 7—Suite 439
North Lauderdale, FL 33068

Dues: $12.50 (US), $18.50 (Canada), $30 (foreign). US Dollars.
Membership includes: Meetings, activities, bi-monthly newsletter, SF news, original fiction and non-fiction by members.

OUTPOST CHRISTIANSTED
Sanctioning: None.
Address: Outpost Christiansted
P.O. Box 1103
Salem, OR 97308-1103
Dues: None.
Membership includes: ID card, address list. Newsletter in planning stage.

U.S.S. CENTAURI 1958-D
An International Trekkers Foundation (ITF) non-profit *Star Trek* organization.
Sanctioning: None.
Address: *U.S.S. Centauri*
P.O. Box 571, Umhlanga Rocks
Natal, 4320 South Africa
Dues: A *Trek* novel or any Classic *Trek* poster.
Membership includes: Bi-monthly newslettter and three fanzines. A certificate and *Star Trek* passport and ID card. Update on pen pals and clubs. Entry into the *Trek* games club. Honorary members are Majel Barrett and William Shatner.

THE NEUTRAL ZONE BAR AND GRILL
A *Star Trek* club for all species, all galaxies.
Sanctioning: None.
Address: The Neutral Zone Bar & Grill
c/o Caroline Miles, Bouncer
1518 Dianne Drive
Jackson, MS 39204-5115
Dues: $8 for 6 months. $15 yearly ($10 & $17 outside US).
Membership includes: Bi-monthly magazine and newsletter, ID card, 12 original *Trek*-art postcards, NZB & G pin, parties and annual water battle with Klingons of MS & LA.

TRIBBLETALK
The best of both worlds—a non-profit newsletter encompassing Classic *Trek* and *Next Generation.*
Sanctioning: None.
Address: TribbleTalk
20 S. Chestnut Street
Oconomowoc, WI 53066
Dues: $10 US & Canada, $18 overseas.
Membership includes: Six bi-monthly newsletters ranging in length from 18-24 pages. Newsletters include convention, book and show reviews, member profiles, all the latest *Trek* news and information and a pen pals section. Send large SASE.

TREKKIN
A fanzine for all generations of *Star Trek* fans. Includes Classic *Trek*, movies, *Next Generation*; stories, cartoons and more.
Sanctioning: None.
Address: Trekkin
ParadoX Productions
518 Lake Street
Herkimer, NY 13350-1010
Dues: $5, postpaid.

OUTPOST
A non-profit, English language, Classic *Star Trek*-only fan club.
Sanctioning: Gene Roddenberry.
Address: Outpost
Karen Hayden & Bettina Rackel

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Art: Kevin Brockschmidt

Rheinstrasse 23
4150 Krefeld
West Germany
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Membership includes: Six newsletters, membership package, various supplements and merchandise. A fanzine and plans for club conventions to be held in the UK.

U.S.S. STELLAR WIND NCC-1501
Sanctioning: Starfleet International.
Address: John T. Burt
U.S.S. Stellar Wind
2201 Drew Avenue
Turlock, CA 95380
Dues: Write for complete information. $10 US (*Stellar Wind*). $15 US (Starfleet).
Membership includes: Handbook, position and rank, bi-monthly newsletter/fanzine which has art, media news, articles, convention listings and fan fiction.

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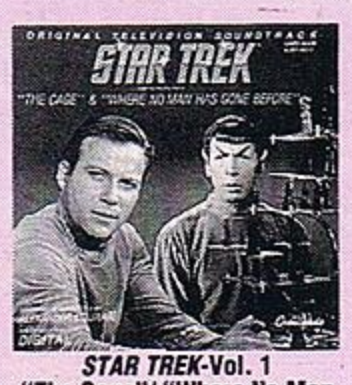

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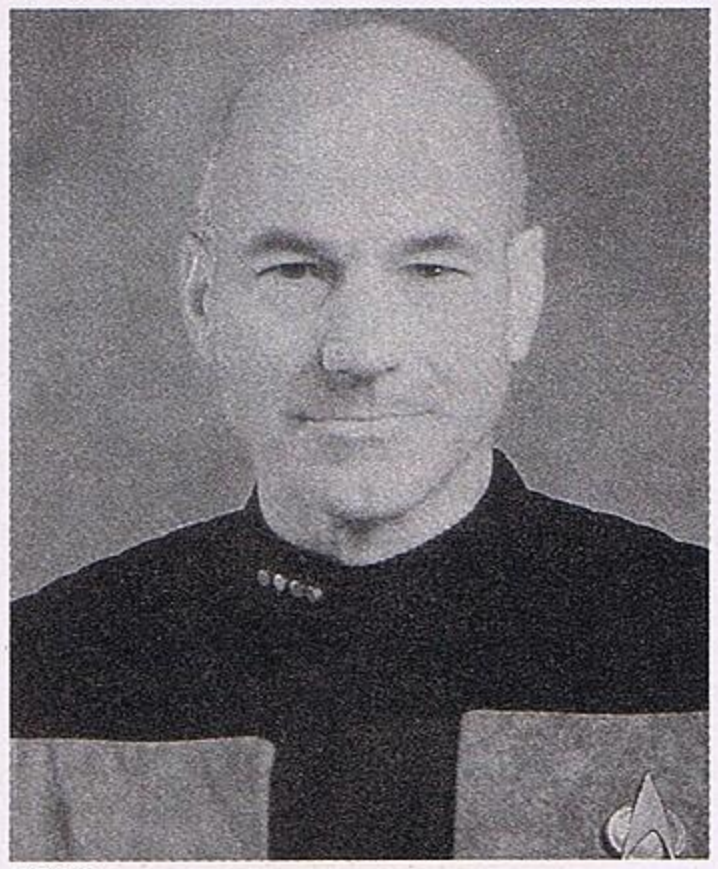

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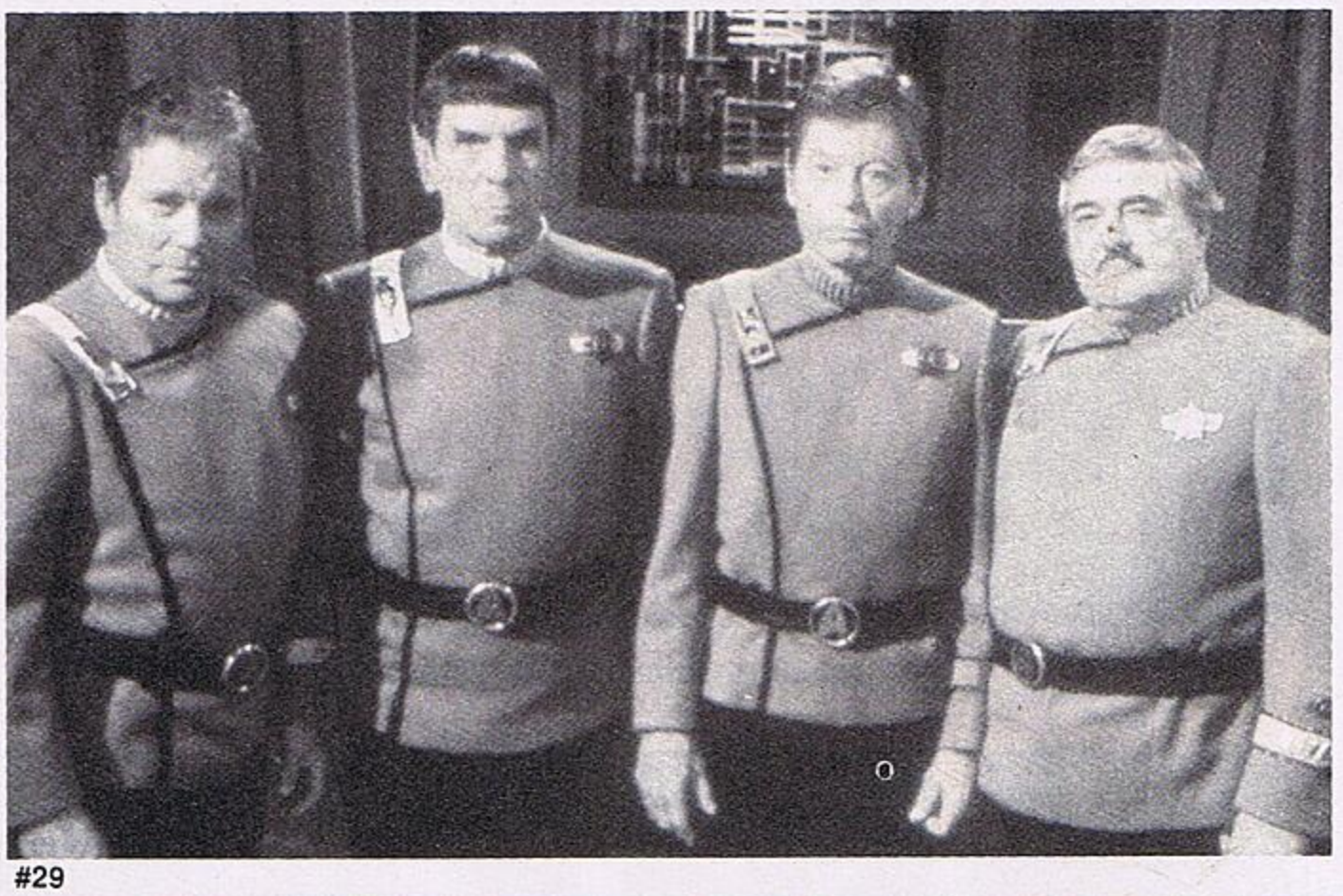

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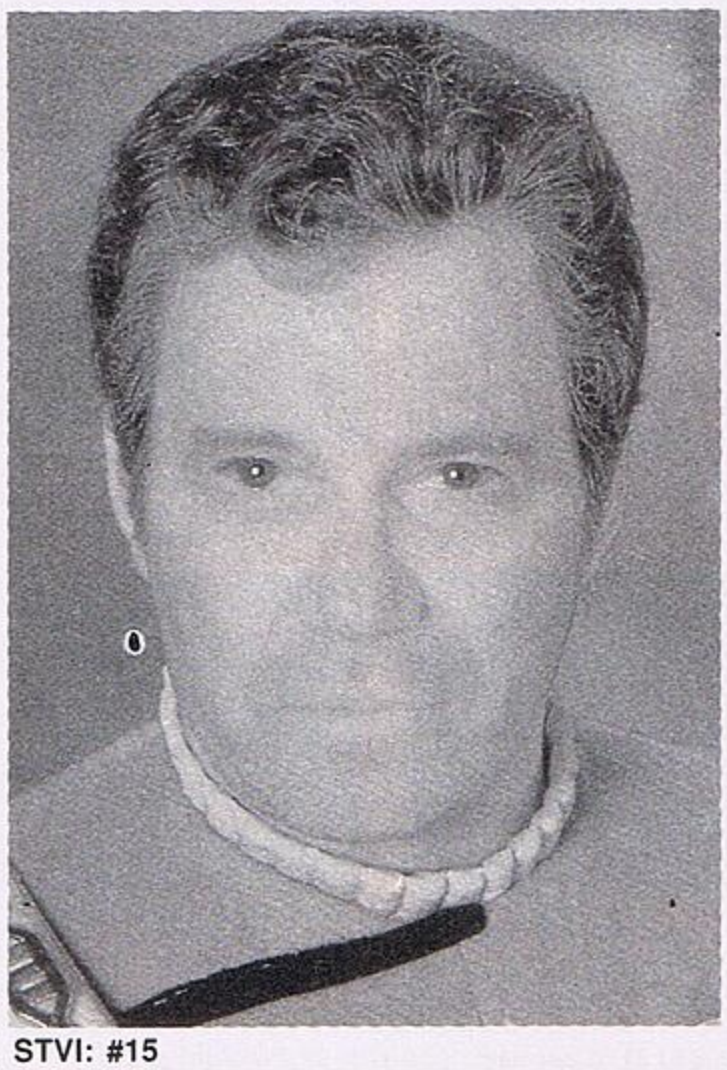

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____11 Chang
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____17 Kirk
____21 Spock
____22 Spock close-up
____25 Valeris & Spock
____26 Sarek, Valeris, Spock
____27 Spock & Sarek
____29 Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Scott
____33 Kirk

STAR TREK VI STILLS
____JD2 Scott
____5 McCoy
____10 Spock, McCoy & photon torpedo
____13 Spock mindmelds Valeris
____16 Kirk on bridge
____18 Kirk at headquarters
____19 Spock on bridge
____20 Spock at headquarters
____24 Kirk & Spock
____28 Worf defends Kirk & McCoy
____31 Kirk & McCoy on frozen Rura Penthe
____32 Kirk & McCoy on trial

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____PS2 Picard
____DC2 Sela
____GM4 Beverly Crusher
____PS4 Picard as Romulan
____MS4 Troi
____5 Riker
____MD9 Worf
____10 Guinan & Picard
____14 Crew

NEXT GENERATION STILLS
____9 "Sins of the Father"
____11 "QPid," Picard as Robin Hood
____12 "QPid," Geordi & Data
____15 "QPid," Troi & Riker
____16 "QPid," Riker, Picard, Troi
____18 "Darmok," Dathon & Picard
____19 "Unification," Spock & Data

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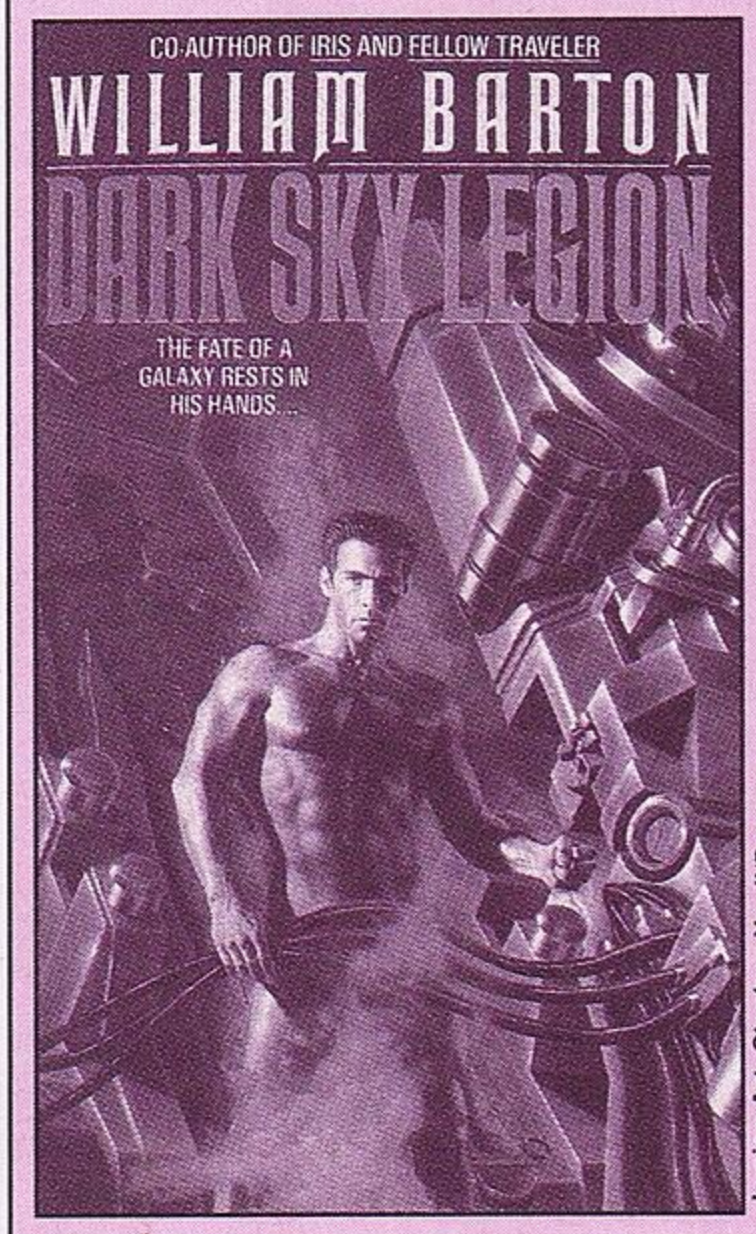

Legion Art: Stephen Youll/Bantam

***Dark Sky Legion* by William Barton (Bantam, paperback, 404 pp, $4.99)**

William Barton calls his new novel *Dark Sky Legion* "an ahrimanic novel." An Ahriman is an evil spirit in Middle Eastern mythology; in Zoroastrianism, he is the main spirit of Evil. Barton doesn't explain this labelling, but it seems he's casting his hero, Maaron Denthurion, as an evil spirit. This is only partially legitimate, since Maaron is really the only character in the book who feels any responsibility or compassion for those he judges in his role as a planet-hopping ambassador. It doesn't stop him, however, from wiping out entire populations if he feels the need; perhaps the demonic force here is the government, for which he acts as an agent.

The story is convoluted, and would have been more enjoyable if it hadn't been filled with so many flashbacks and clever asides. The original Maaron, a senator on Earth, has been "branched" (cloned by machine) until there are close to a hundred of him after 10,000 years. Each of the "branchings," a separate man with his own personality and characteristics (though they all look the same), is "reincarnated" every time he leaves a planet to go on to his next job as "Televox" for the "Metastable Order." After each "incarnation," Maaron emerges again as a grown man—in effect, his consciousness is frozen while in transit and then thawed when he reaches his destination, with a new body.

According to the rules of the "Order," Olam is a world which has gone astray. These rules are based on those set down by the "Saints of Disorder" during the Red Millennium, which lasted from AD 1450-2450. One of the "Saints" was Adolph Hitler, which should give the reader an idea of how the "Order" works. Or doesn't work, really—it's a completely unstable government based on the random whims of planetary influences and men who've lived too long.

—Debora Hill

***Black Steel* by Steve Perry (Ace, paperback, 245 pp, $4.50)**

The hero of Steve Perry's latest Matador novel, *Black Steel*, is Sleel. He is, of course, a Matador, one of the master warriors Perry introduced in *The Man Who Never Missed*. When Sleel signs on to bodyguard master thief Jersey Reason, he gets more than he bargained for. Upon his arrival in Hawaii, he is attacked by the first in a long line of assassins who wield strange black blades.

Reason, who has retired, doesn't know which of his former victims wants him dead. Unfortunately for him, it's Cierto, leader of the powerful House of Black Steel. Many years before, Reason had successfully stolen the secret of making the fabled black sword steel. Sleel prevents several attempts on his client's life, but Cierto is relentless. Sleel is rescued by Kee Wu, a master of the black sword who has her own score to settle with Cierto. Wu restores Sleel's self-confidence by training him in her own version of the martial arts, and the two of them meet Cierto in a final showdown.

Sure, it's old stuff, but it's tightly written, short and to the point, an oft-told tale told well. Perry's Matador novels are good examples of the polished action-adventure thriller, and *Black Steel* is no exception.

—T.W. Knowles II

***Ray Bradbury Presents Dinosaur World* by Stephen Leigh (AvoNova, paperback, 274 pp, $4.99)**

In *Dinosaur World*, Stephen Leigh tries to spin a pulp adventure from Ray Bradbury's classic short story "A Sound of Thunder," but the result—the latest product of packager Byron Preiss' strategy of hiring new, young authors to produce books from ideas and plots of old masters like Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke—is tiresome and repetitious, and does justice to no one.

Leigh mixes two of Bradbury's time travelers, one good and one bad, with three teenagers (the target audience) in a world of distorted history—samurai warriors duel sapient dinosaurs in one scene—that supposedly evolved from Bradbury's yarn. The ensuing escapes, fights and cliffhangers lead to an unsatisfactory ending with lots of room for sequels.

Leigh does try for a Bradbury-like mood in his opening chapters set in small-town

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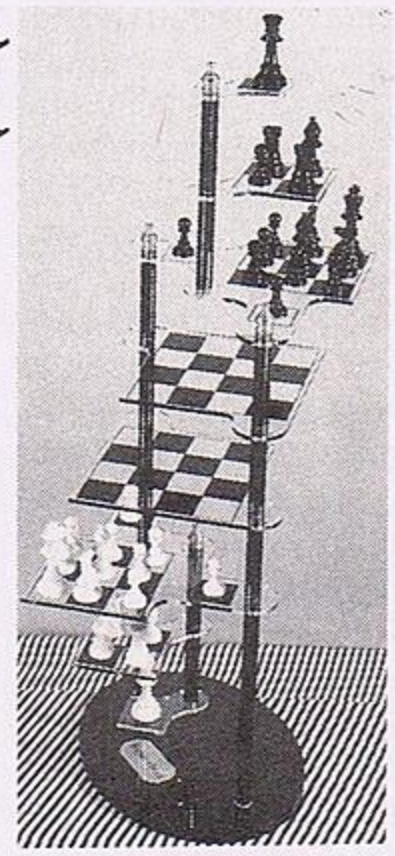

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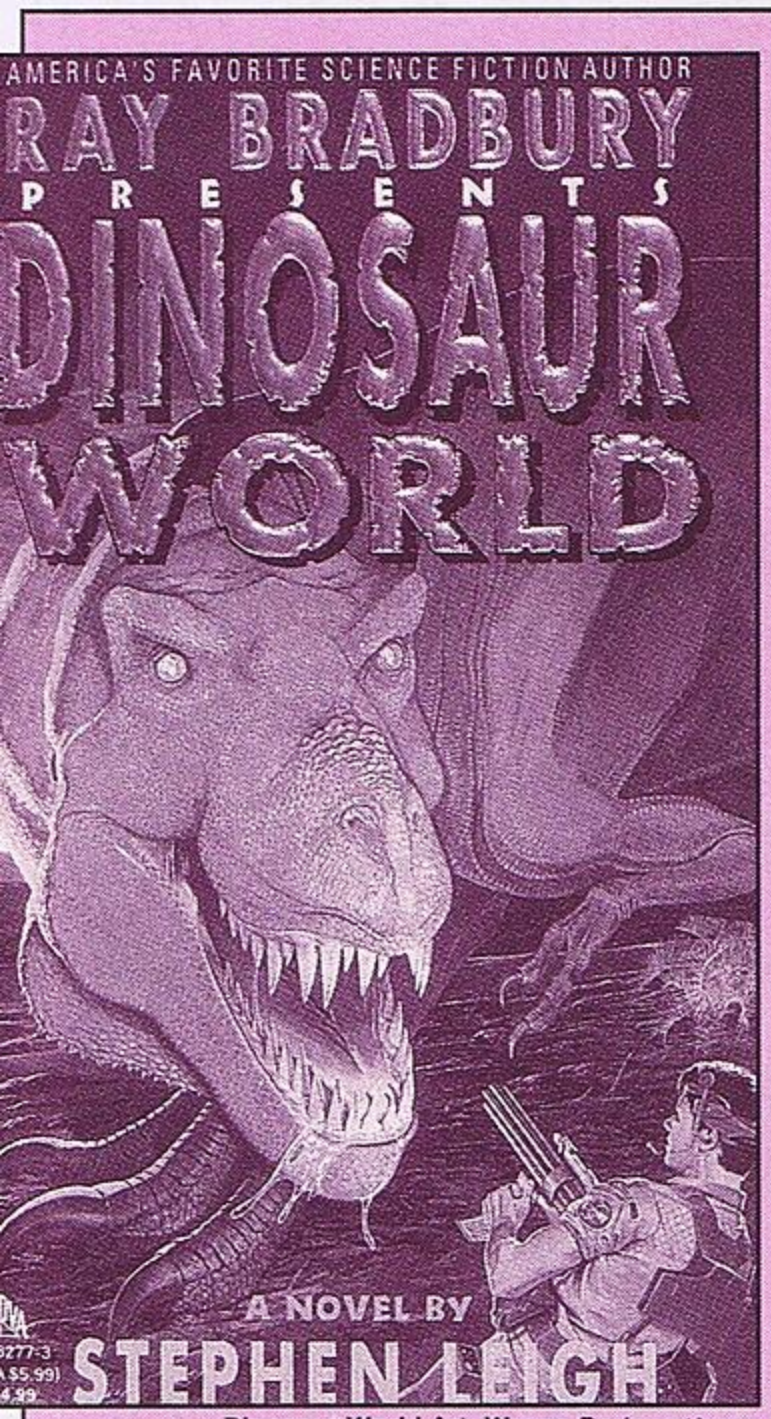


Dinosaur World Art: Wayne Barlowe/Avon

America, and some of the scenes in the Mesozoic era and a weird alternate future dominated by a disembodied mind are effective. The best part of the book is heroine Jennifer's relationship with her captor, SStragh, one of the intelligent dinosaurs. This, and the care Leigh takes with his sapient duckbills, their culture and environment, shows the potential for a good story, but *Dinosaur World* isn't that story.

—Scott W. Schumack

***Raft* by Stephen Baxter (Roc, paperback, 303 pp, $4.99)**

In the closed universe of Stephen Baxter's *Raft*, gravity is insane, and the space between the stars is filled with a living sea of atmosphere. The distant descendants of a starship crew trapped in this bizarre universe mine stars for their metals, manufacture their food and energy from the nebulaeic cloud, and travel on circular, gravity-sensitive trees. Over the generations, the "sky" has changed from a clear blue to a bloody red, and young Rees, low-class star miner, recognizes it as a sign that the nebula is almost depleted. If his people are to survive, Rees must convince them to look beyond the confines of their wasted prison and their own narrow cultural beliefs.

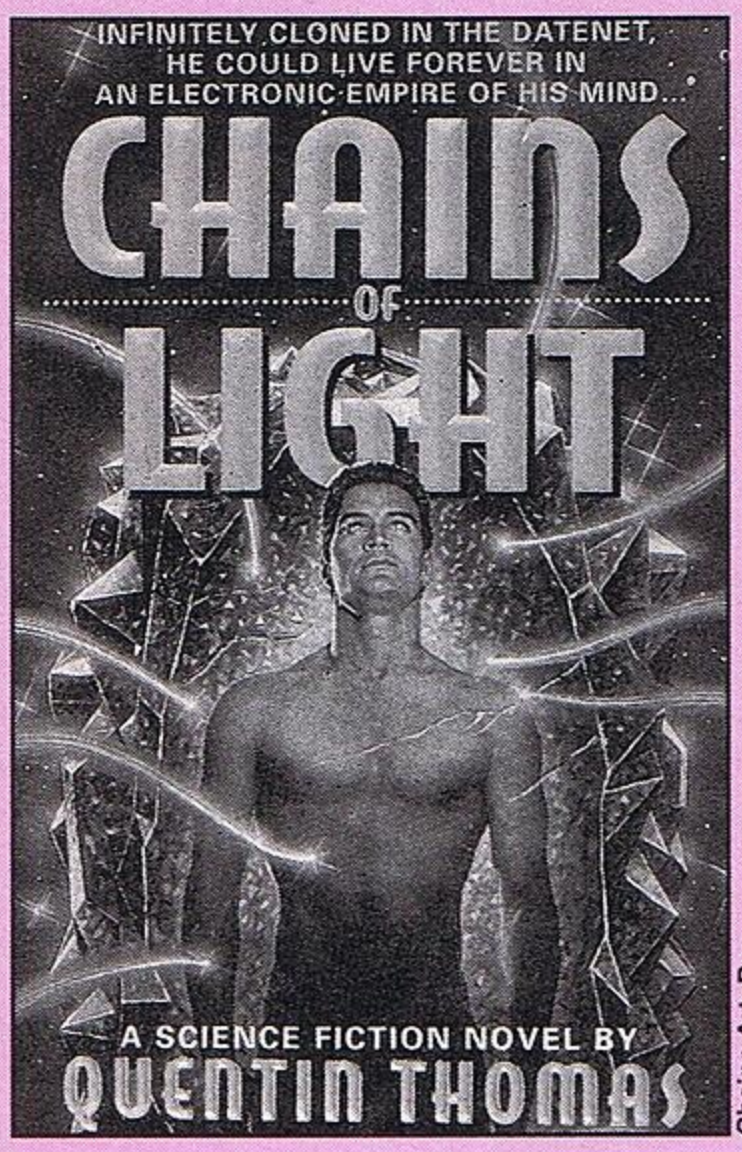
The storyline is an old one—an outcast youngster overcomes a society's prejudices in order to save it from itself—but *Raft* is imaginative and fairly well-written, if somewhat reminiscent of Larry Niven's *The Integral Trees*. When Baxter's characters can't quite carry the tale, he taps into an old-fashioned sense of wonder and adds some colorful imagery to hold the reader's interest. And whenever the story threatens to get dull, he throws in fine gee-whiz touches such as huge, ghost-like space "whales" and the primitive "Boneys" who hunt them. So what's wrong with a little gee-whiz every now and then?

—T.W. Knowles II

***Chains of Light* by Quentin Thomas (Roc, paperback, 283 pp, $4.99)**

A multiplanet empire, called the Hegemony, functions through the use of hundreds of human templates. Specially nurtured until full development occurs, and protected from outside stimuli to keep the brain a blank slate, the neural pattern of the templates is copied thousands of times per second. These copies, called Icons, are connected in an immense matrix of unlimited computing power known as the Web.

On the Hegemony's main planet, home to over 65 billion people, technician Charlie Seagrave decides that the Template he babysits, a 13-year-old boy named Lucifer, could use a visit from the ultimate prostitute. Charlie is suddenly dragged into a secret plot that could lead to the Hegemony's downfall. Meanwhile, Lucifer, elsewhere in the Web, is absolute ruler of his own empire. He rules over millions of subjects, all copies of him, including the barbarian hordes attacking his empire from the outside.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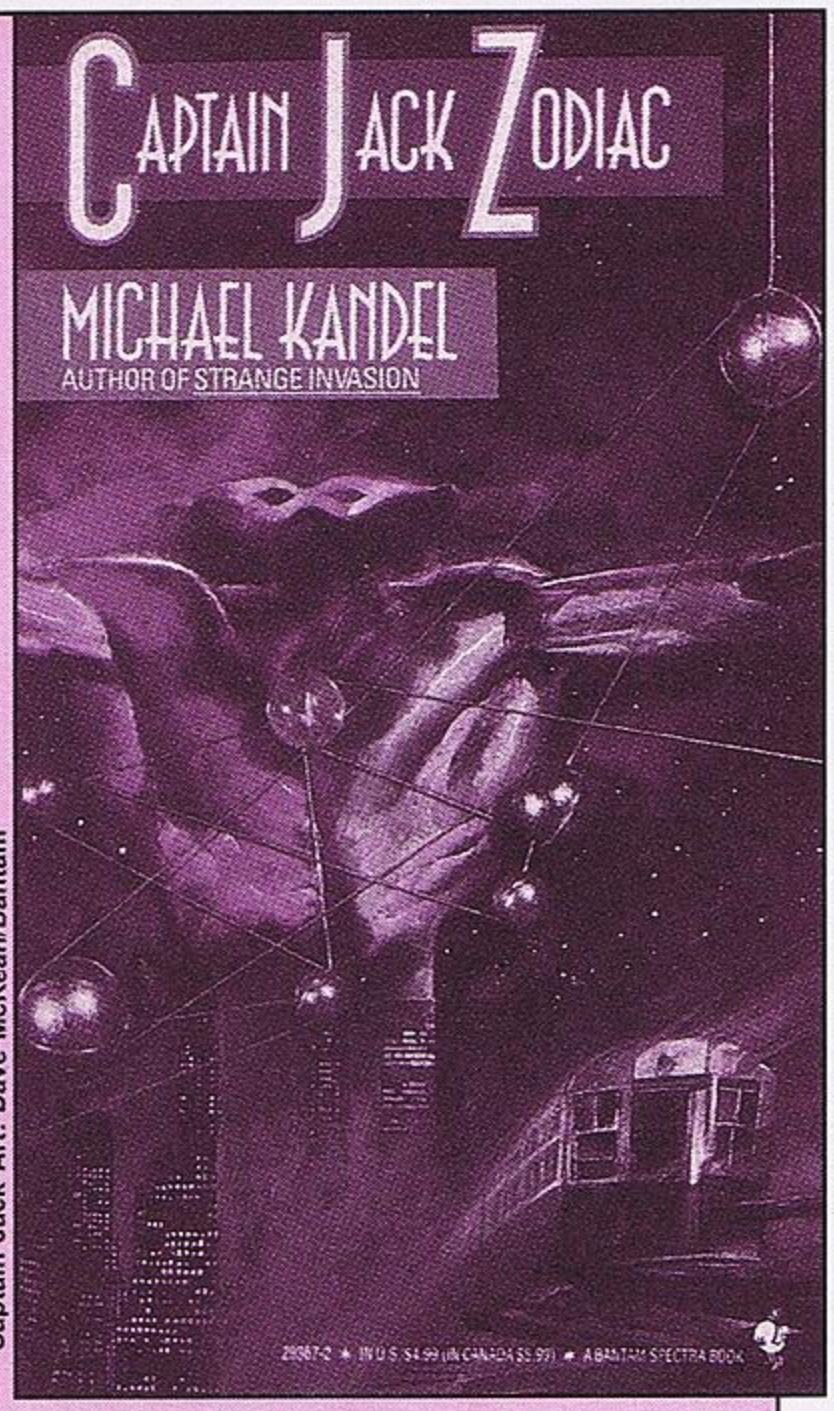
CHAINS OF LIGHT
A SCIENCE FICTION NOVEL BY
QUENTIN THOMAS

Chains Art: Roc

Most of this book is two very different stories, with little connection between them; and, as it is part one of a series, it accomplishes very little. The series has possibilities, but, by itself, *Chains of Light* just isn't very interesting.

—Paul M. Lappen



Captain Jack Art: Dave McKean/Bantam

***Captain Jack Zodiac* by Michael Kandel (Bantam/Spectra, paperback, 260 pp, $4.99)**

In *Captain Jack Zodiac*, Michael Kandel takes all of our modern fears—crime, nuclear war, disease, drug abuse, family strife, economic collapse and ecological disaster—and wraps them up in the character of songwriter Clifford Koussevitsky. Even as Cliff's near-future world is coming apart at the seams, he continues to write upbeat lyrics and struggles to reunite his fractured family. When he unwisely mixes the amazing transcendental drugs he steals from the infamous Captain Jack Zodiac, Cliff finds hismelf bounced from reality to reality like an interdimensional Flying Dutchman. His search for his missing children takes him through the grey shades of the afterworld, the phantom zone of the mall zombies and the alien worlds of deep space to a shattering final reality.

Kandel writes with a peculiar clarity of vision, continually redefining the underlying reality of his story to conform to his own funky specifications. With an unrelenting, slapstick glee, he skillfully blends the most disturbing images of violence with the most hilarious of comic absurdities. *Captain Jack Zodiac* is at turns dreamlike and sarcastically sharp; it balances on the jagged edge between laughter and hysteria. It's fine black comedy with an offbeat ending, and it asks the question: "Will the world end with neither a bang nor a whimper, but with a guilty chuckle?" Kandel's subtle and not-so-subtle twists of humor will keep the reader guessing. Recommended.

—T.W. Knowles II

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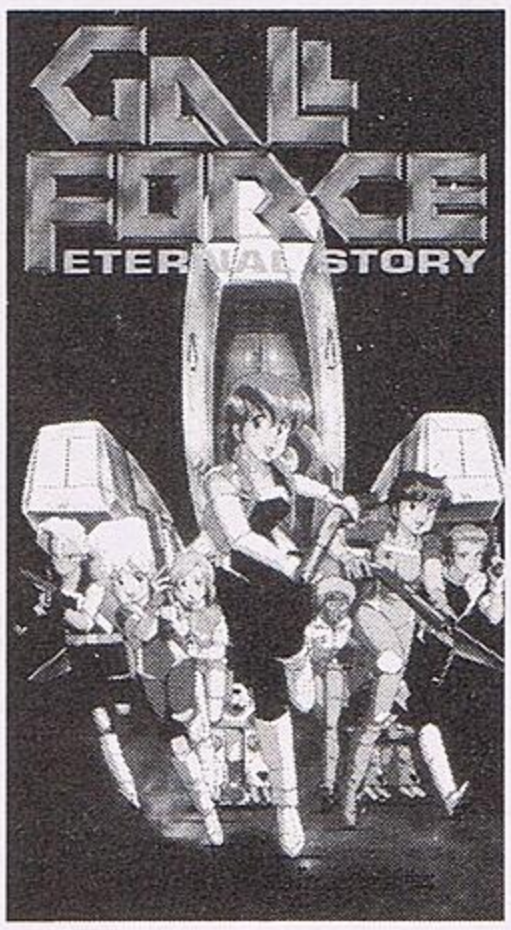

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FROM THE BRIDGE

Fantasy Tripping

I'm trapped with two friends inside a motel room in Sandusky, Ohio, on the south shore of Lake Erie, while thunderstorms rage outside. The Weather Channel tells us of flooding throughout the state and warns us of tornadoes. Despite this nightmare, we are three happy humans, because we are doing something which many only dream of doing—we are fantasy tripping.

This trip began several weeks ago when Kendall Larned, John Broady and I discussed our shared passion for roller-coasters. My passion began in childhood with the big-screen movie extravaganza *This Is CINERAMA*, which opened with a gut-wrenching ride on New York's Rockaway Coaster. Then, in 1979, my friends John Waldrop and John Michael Risaliti compiled a book, published by STARLOG PRESS, which included the first coast-to-coast coaster directory. For coaster fans, this publication was invaluable. (It's still available from STARLOG: $9.00, postage included)

John Broady's coaster passion began when he was six years old, and his big brother forced him onto the runaway mine train at Six Flags Over Texas. John begged not to go, but when the ride was over, he was hooked. Kendall's first coaster experience was also a mine train ride. He loved the adrenaline rush, the danger.

Every fan of science fiction has his own equivalent thrill—a battle with swords or laser rifles, a trip into space or through time, explorations of science or alien cultures. The goal of life is taking personal thrills from imagination and living them for real—making fantasies come true.

Our fantasy was a trip across a major portion of the United States, riding *every* roller-coaster along the way. We started with the world's tallest, steepest, fastest wooden coaster—the Rattler at San Antonio's new theme park, Fiesta Texas. We went to Dallas/Ft. Worth for the Texas Giant, another huge "woodie," then to St. Louis where the Ninja (a steel looping coaster) lured us into many breathtaking re-rides. Next, Kings Island in Cincinnati, and now Sandusky's Cedar Point, called "America's Roller Coast," with *nine* (!) sensational coasters—all drenched in rain today.

It's hard to get coaster enthusiasts to agree on a "best ride." Opinions are personal and strong. However, we three agreed that the big thriller of our trip was the new coaster at Chicago's Great America—Batman, the ride.

Batman is a steel coaster, with eight rows of four individual seats suspended from an overhead track. Join me...

The line is long, but entertaining. First, you snake through a public park which (the plaque reads) has been donated to the citizens of Gotham City by Bruce Wayne. Soon the line goes behind chain-link fences, and we see a police car, emergency lights flashing, which has smashed a fireplug and crashed into a wall. Water sprays from beneath the deserted car, and steam fills the air. Now, we're seeing the dangerous side of Gotham City, littered with barbed wire and graffiti—and we hear the sounds of motorcycles, sirens and screams. Behind all this, Danny Elfman's music from the Batman movies creates a mysterious, exciting atmosphere.

Next, we enter a dark storm drain and climb narrow metal stairs until, at last, we arrive at the loading platform—designed to look like the Batcave. When we are seated, and our safety bar is pulled down, the floor lowers—leaving our legs hanging. Immediately, the train moves forward, up the tall, steep chain lift. The first time I rode Batman, the fellow next to me asked if I had been on it before. I said no, and he grinned fiendishly, "It's the fastest ever!"

Within seconds, I knew that he was right. We reached the top of the lift, dived straight toward the ground and, at the last second, flew upward around a vertical loop with no track visible, just giant black columns of steel—then the sky—then the ground—then more steel structures. Our legs were flinging outward, and those who could breathe were screaming.

We were slung into more loops—hurled through corkscrew turns—zoomed up steep hills, down sudden valleys and around sharp corners—no brakes, no moments to enjoy the view. The ride was a blur of terror! When we arrived at the Batcave platform, we were relieved to feel our feet on the floor again, yet we found ourselves racing down the graffiti-covered ramps, through the exit area cluttered with Gotham City trash, past the gleaming Batmobile on display, heading for that park made possible by Bruce Wayne's generosity—where the line begins again.

By the way, around mid-afternoon the rain stopped in Sandusky. We left the motel, went to Cedar Point and stayed at the park till midnight. All the rides were running, but there were *no crowds*. We rode *and instantly re-rode* coasters which normally would have minimum two-hour lines. For fans with a mission, even the darkest clouds have silver linings.

—Kerry O'Quinn

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IT! THE TERROR FROM BEYOND COMICS

From out of space and into comic books, It comes.

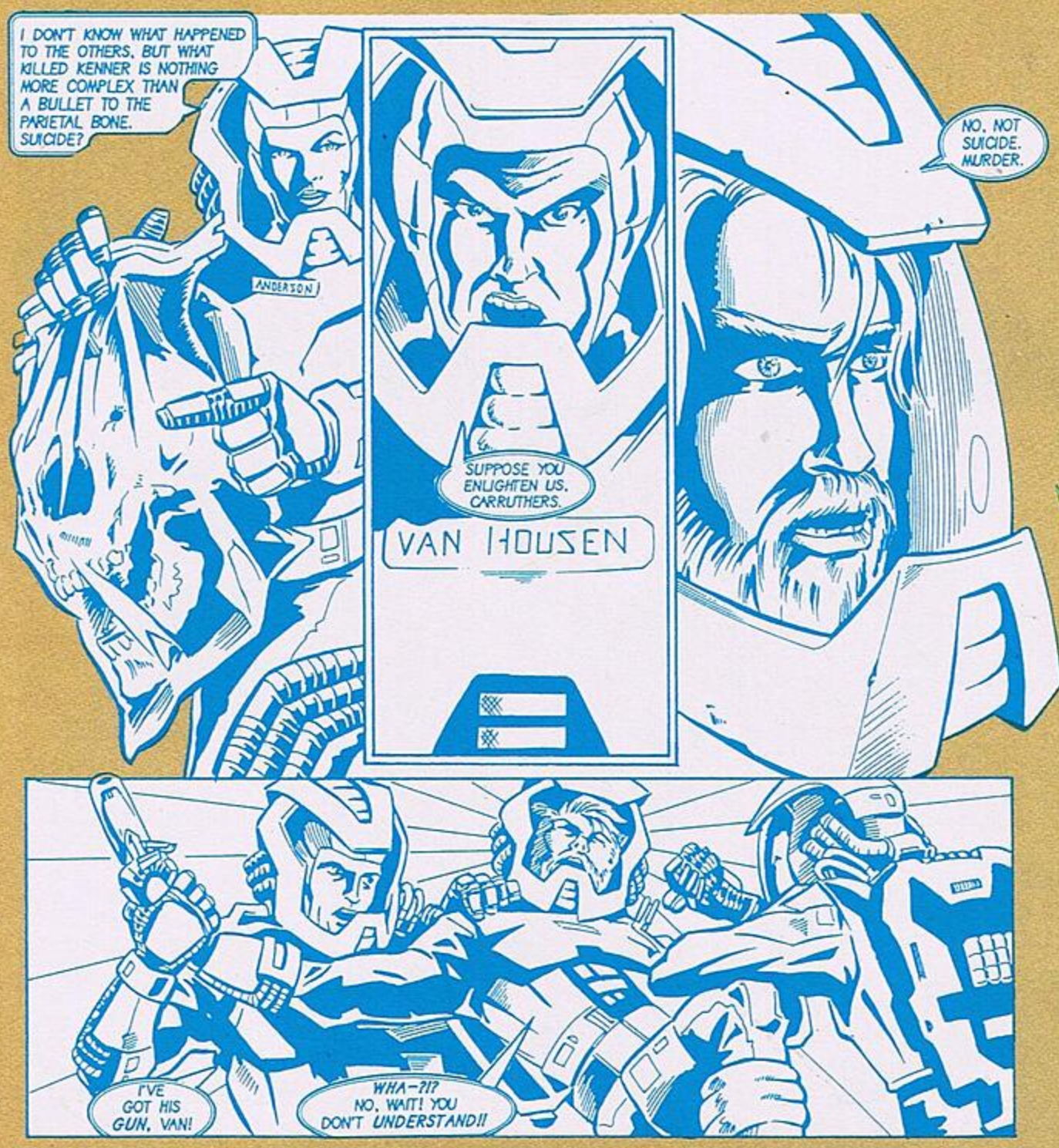
By TOM WEAVER

They are science-fiction plot elements that have become clichés in recent years: The rocketship adrift in the black void of space; the alien monster—well-armed with razor-teeth and talons—stowed aboard; frightened crew members fanning out through dark corridors and cramped ventilation shafts to contain or destroy the beast. In the 13 years since director Ridley Scott's *ALIEN* set the 1979 box office on its ear, SF fans have seen two direct sequels and a legion of low-budget imitation flicks, not to mention several popular comic book mini-series from Dark Horse.

But back in the '50s, when manned space flight (let alone lunar and Martian landings) were still promised events of the future, the idea of explorers facing a monster as well as the daunting prospect of a trip into "the final frontier" was a new and terrifying notion. United Artists' *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* was the first film to explore such an idea, and it became a cult favorite. Unlike many other modestly-made SF films of that era, *It!* remained entrenched in fans' memories; when *ALIEN* came along in 1979, they might have been impressed with the special FX or the multi-million-dollar mounting, but few were deceived by the half-alike plot.

"When I saw *ALIEN* for the first time," writer Mark Ellis remembers, "about 30 minutes into it, I turned to my soon-to-be wife Melissa and grumbled, 'Aw, hell, this is just an uncredited remake of *It!*' I *still* look at *ALIEN* as just a remake, and I *groaned* at the end, when they dispatched the monster. They couldn't even think of a better way to get rid of this damn thing than to have to borrow from *It!* again? The picture just didn't do much for me."

Ellis, wife Melissa Martin and third partner Paul Davis—the principals of Millennium Comics—decided back in spring 1990 that adapting *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* into a comic book mini-series was a viable idea, Ellis and Davis both being longtime fans of the 1958 film. "We had always loved the movie," Ellis asserts, remembering the project's inception from the pond-side office of his Sun City, Florida farm. "I can recall the first time I saw it: I was about eight, and here in Tampa, there was a local TV program on Saturday afternoons called *Terminus Theater of Science Fiction*—it was one of those *Double Chiller Horror Theater*-type of shows; every city seemed to have one. I can remember when *Terminus* showed *It! The Terror* the first time, I watched the last 30 minutes from be-


I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHERS, BUT WHAT KILLED KENNER IS NOTHING MORE COMPLEX THAN A BULLET TO THE PARIETAL BONE. SUICIDE?
ANDERSON
NO. NOT SUICIDE. MURDER.
SUPPOSE YOU ENLIGHTEN US, CARRUTHERS.
VAN HOUSEN
I'VE GOT HIS GUN, VAN!
WHA—?!? NO, WAIT! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!!

It! the comic should appeal to people who "like a good, blood-curdling-type of comics horror story," according to Mark Ellis.

With "a mouth full of truly formidable teeth," Millennium Comics' It surpasses the '58 model.

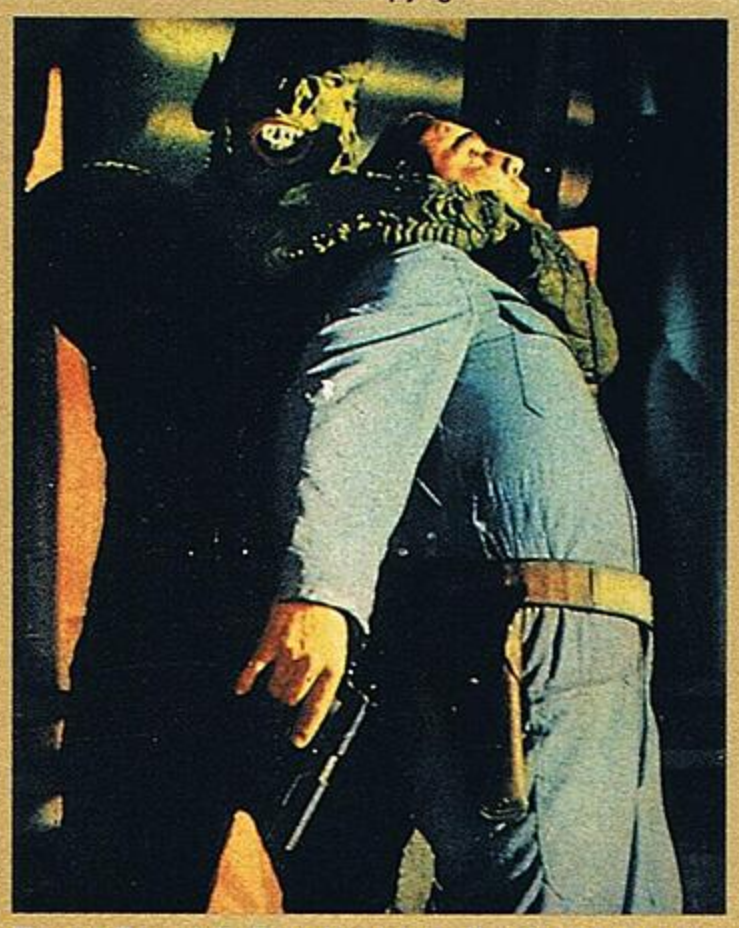
hind a couch, in case I wanted to avert my eyes. It really scared the hell out of me.

"I saw it a time or two in the years that followed, and I never forgot it. So, there we were, brainstorming about films that would make the transition to comics, and *It!* just seemed to be a natural. After all, *ALIEN*—which is a direct descendant—*was* and *is* successful as a comic. Why not give *ALIEN*'s progenitor a whirl?"

Redesigning It!

The film, made under producer Edward Small's Vogue Pictures banner, was quickly shot (under the title *It, the Vampire from Outer Space*) on the lot of Los Angeles TV station KTTV in January 1958. Future *Star Trek* writer Jerome Bixby (STARLOG #164) wrote the story of a spaceship dispatched to Mars to rescue stranded members of a previous expedition. U.S. Space Command Colonel Carruthers (Marshall Thompson), sole survivor of the ill-fated *Challenge 141* mission, tells of a monster which killed off his spacemates, but rescue-ship commander Van Heusen (Kim Spalding) places Carruthers under arrest, certain that he murdered his crew in order to hoard the limited food supply while awaiting rescue. The film opens at this point, as Van Heusen's ship prepares for its return trip to Earth—and the armor-scaled, ape-like Martian monster (Western star/stuntman Ray "Crash" Corrigan) climbs aboard through a hatch inadvertently left open.

It Film Photo: Copyright 1958 United Artists



Ray "Crash" Corrigan stalked the stars in the 1958 film *It! The Terror From Beyond Space.*

Budget limitations hampered monster suit designer Paul Blaisdell, who fabricated a cumbersome costume with rubber scales (constantly falling off) and an oversized head mask (Corrigan's chin protruded through the open mouth, looking like It's tongue). Millennium, whose medium is the printed page, was faced with no such practical considerations in the four-part miniseries.

"It [the monster] is basically the same as he was in the film, except he doesn't look so much like 'Crash' Corrigan in a rubber suit," says Ellis. "It's designed more like a creature would be. At first, we thought about totally redesigning it, but that wasn't a very good idea. About the only thing we've really changed in him is that we've made him slightly larger and a bit more lanky. And he has a mouthful of formidable teeth, instead of Corrigan's chin sticking out like a tongue.

"Because of his appearance, I've given more thought to It as an actual extraterrestrial. According to the film, It subsists completely on moisture, absorbing every drop of blood, glandular secretions and spinal fluid from its victims. The film doesn't explain *how*—no puncture wounds are ever found on the bodies. But a creature that subsists on moisture would really have no need for fangs or claws. So, I've tried to come up with a reason why something like that is equipped with claws and fangs. I've also worked out a thoroughly revolting process of how It absorbs the victims' bodily fluids without leaving a puncture wound."

Ellis has tried to remain faithful to Jerome Bixby's screenplay overall, but he's keeping in mind that SF fans in the '90s are far savvier than they were in the '50s.

"We're following Bixby's screenplay pretty closely, but we've made alterations," he explains. "For example, the movie [released in 1958] was set in the far-flung future of 1973. So, since we're doing the

adaptation of *It!* in 1992, we simply added 15 years to *that*, setting it within the first decade of the 21st century. Obviously, much more is known about Mars and space travel now than was known in '58, so the adaptation reflects the knowledge that they didn't have when the film was originally made. For instance, I've incorporated a few of the puzzles that the Viking spacecraft photographed on the Martian landscapes, like the so-called Monuments of Mars, the Great Stone Face and the Pyramid City. They're now important elements in *It!*'s storyline. We really don't know if these features are natural or artificial, but in our story, they're definitely intelligently-crafted constructs.

"Also, we've added a backstory about how they find It. In the film, the main character—Carruthers—was stranded on Mars, rescued and then accused of killing the first ship's crew. Suddenly, the monster casually shimmies up into the spaceship when a guy takin' out the garbage leaves a hatch open," Ellis laughs. "That's not too bad, I *guess*, but I came up with something a little bit different: The first mission's crew finds It's dehydrated remains inside one of the Pyramids, more or less like a Martian mummy. They accidentally revive it when one of the crew members' spacesuits is punctured, and the escaping atmosphere forms as frost on It's remains, which is only in a state of suspended animation."

Millennium's space crew will be the same as that of the film, Ellis promises. "The characters are essentially the same, though I've slanted the emphasis on them so they won't seem so dated. One thing I did want to do was try to make it a bit more multi-racial, but for some reason, [rights owners] MGM wouldn't let us do that. One change in characterization involves the creature itself. In the film, the space crew seems *not* to know whether It is an intelligent thing or just some mindless, bad-tempered monster. So, I have characterized It as a creature who is intelligent; (like *The Thing*) *is* enjoying what it's doing—this game of cat-and-mouse. To It, this is like some sort of sadistic sport."

VERY WHIMSICAL... IT'S MADE OF SOME KIND OF ALLOY. COULD IT BE OCCUPIED?
-FEATHER...
AS SOMEONE COMMENTED EARLIER...ONLY ONE SURE WAY TO FIND OUT.
WHA-? IT'S NOT LOCKED.
AND IT'S AS LIGHT AS--

All It Comics Art: Dean Zachary/Courtesy Millennium Comics

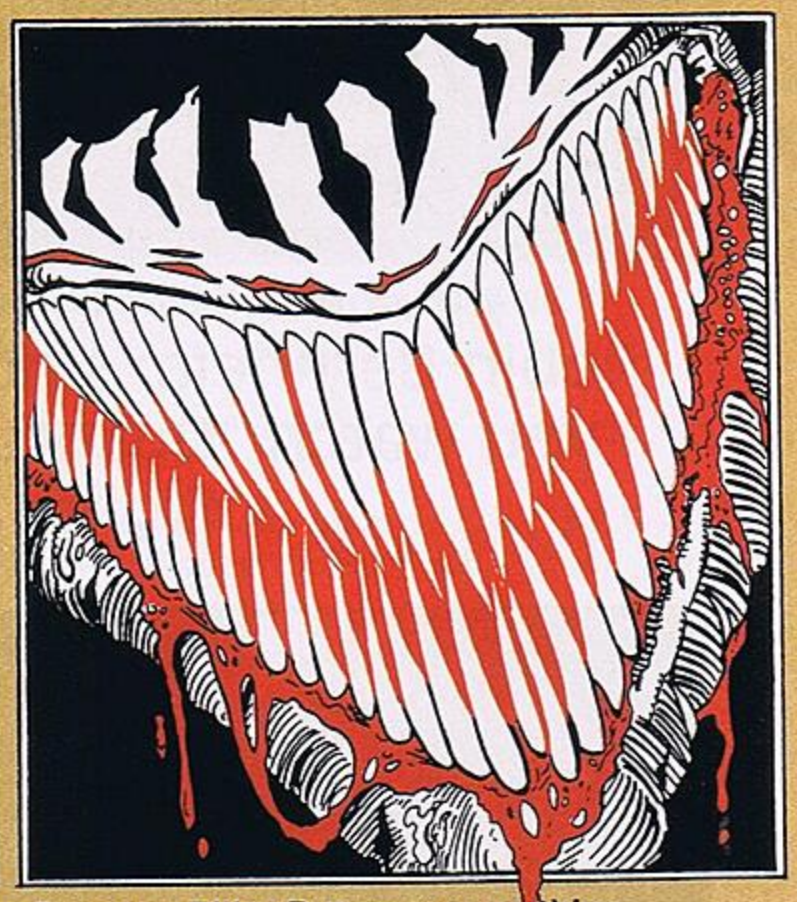
Some discoveries were never meant to be, as this space mission soon realizes.

Updating It!

If there's one thing wrong with the movie, it's the romantic angle involving Carruthers, Van Heusen and obligatory love interest Ann Anderson (played by Shawn Smith). Ann is in love with Van Heusen at the picture's beginning, but after he's mauled by It (and *while* he awaits certain death from the disease It carries), she switches her affections over to Carruthers—and makes no effort to conceal this from Van Heusen (Van Housen in the comic).

"What we've done with that is shift the emphasis," Ellis explains. "For one thing, Van Heusen doesn't call Ann 'Chicken' anymore—I *hated* that; I never knew what that meant! But, seriously, I'm making it more like Van Heusen's attracted to her, and they *may* have had a relationship, but *he's* more interested in her than *she* is in him.

"I've also established that Van Heusen and Carruthers don't like each other from the beginning. There was a manned fly-by of Mars a few years before the actual landing, and Carruthers beat out Van Heusen on that. That's why Van Heusen is so single-minded about finding Carruthers guilty of murder. That way, the triangle makes a little more sense, at least in *my* mind."



It "is basically the same as he was in the film," notes Ellis. But now everything "is like some sort of sadistic sport."

Other movie plot points simply defied analysis, like the formidable arsenal the spacemen have on hand once the monster makes its presence felt. "I can see handguns," Ellis says, "but I *can't* see grenades and bazookas. What the heck did they think they were going to run into?"

Puzzling, too, is why the Earthmen never think to merely dismantle one of the ladders which connect the levels of the multi-story spaceship, rather than allow It to advance up through the ship and eventually corner them in the nose cone. "That occurred to me, too, so in the comics, it's not so much levels as *sections*; they have a series of emergency bulkheads that they're using to try to keep It out. It's more like a submarine. There *are*

(continued on page 72)

LEAP YEARS

By LEE GOLDBERG

Robin Bernheim's doing her part to make you watch "Quantum Leap." (But plane flights are out.)

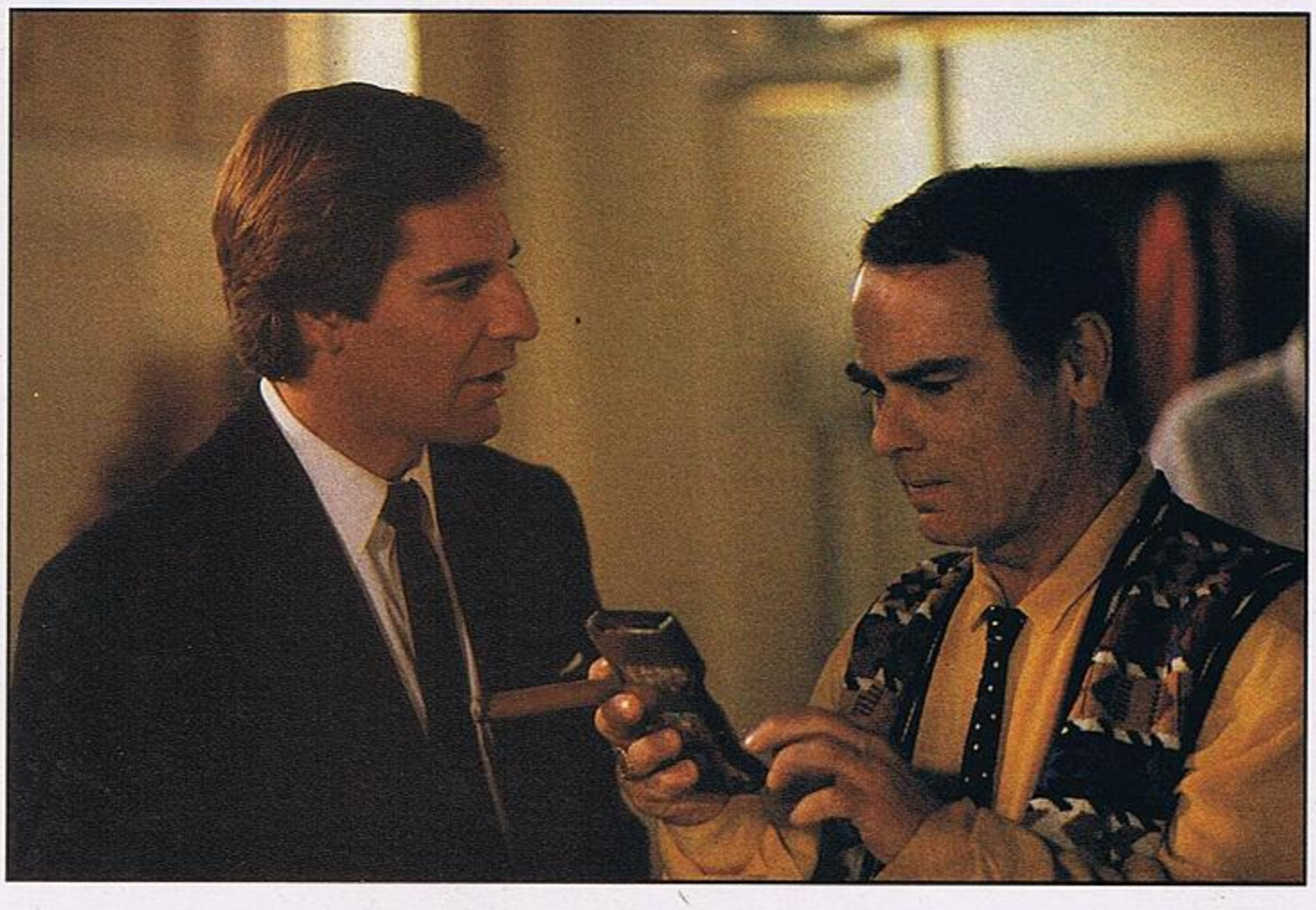


Photo: Ron Tom

The jetliner roared towards the Denver Airport for an emergency landing, an engine ablaze, the passengers buckled tight in their seats, huddled in crash position and braced for disaster.

It was at that moment, her head between her legs, her life flashing before her eyes, Robin Bernheim decided to be a writer.

The former Atari executive can laugh about it now, safe in her Universal Studios office, but like any good storyteller, she obviously relishes the retelling. And who wouldn't with an anecdote like that?

After the plane landed, she doubted her decision, but "if you don't risk big, you don't win big. I didn't care; I knew I had to get out of Atari, and being a writer was my dream."

And now she's ensconced as writer/producer of *Quantum Leap*, one of TV's most critically-acclaimed programs, not to mention one of the most successful SF-themed shows in years. It's a job that suits her well. It's the sort of series where, for instance, hero Sam Beckett (Scott Bakula) just might leap into an Atari executive on the verge of dying in a plane crash, and help her make an important decision about her life.

"*Quantum Leap* is a show going into its fourth year, and it faces the challenge of keeping viewers interested in a show that's maturing," she says. "Last season was the issue-oriented season. This year, we're calling the 'high-concept' season."

High-Concept Leaps

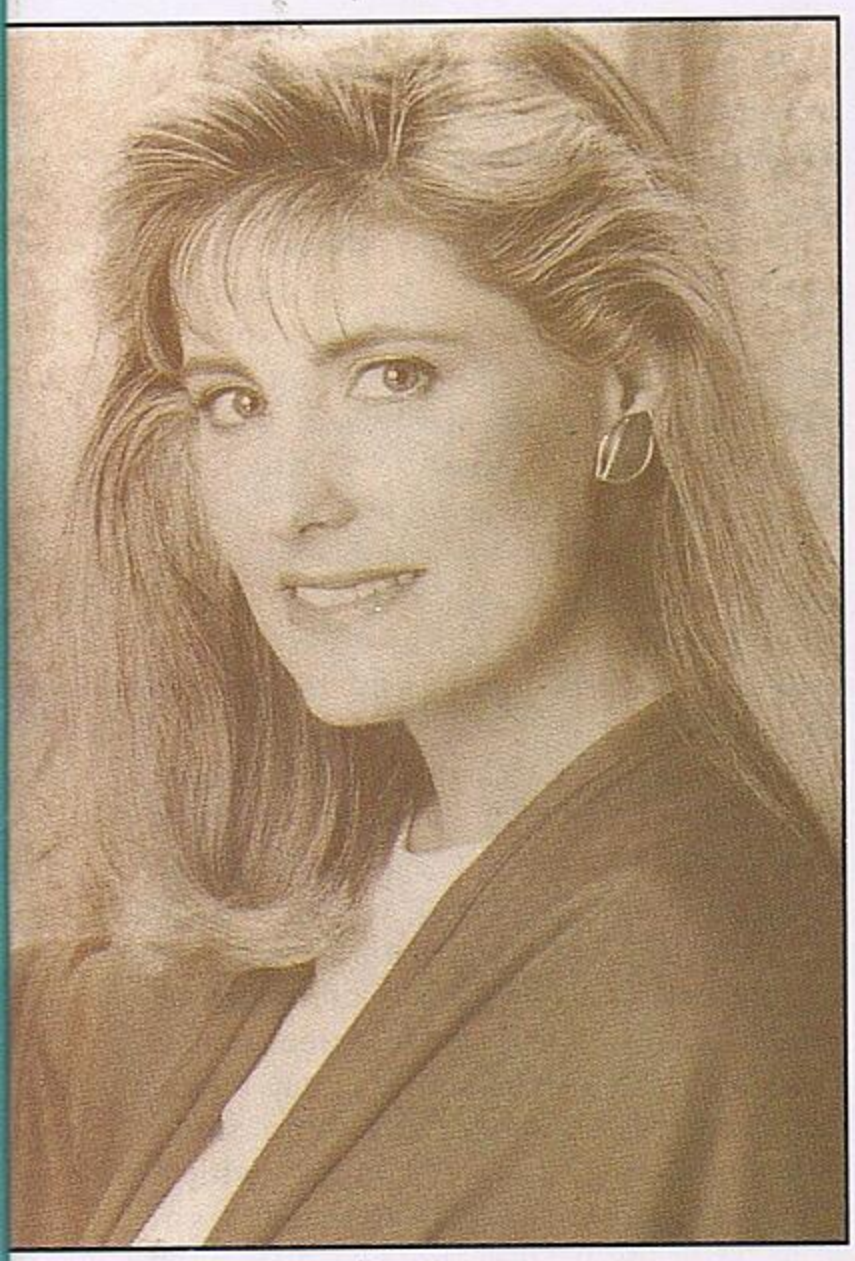
A "high-concept" is, in Hollywood parlance, a story that grabs the audience simply on the strength of its idea. *Quantum Leap*, by its very nature, is high-concept, the notion of a guy who hurtles through time, "leaping" into people's bodies and, for a short while, living their lives for them. Topping *that* high-concept with another is no small feat.

"What concepts can you come up with that will make people think of it as a new show all over again? Concepts that will get loyal viewers really charged to watch and get new viewers because it sounds so great that they *have* to watch?" She says the staff members have been asking themselves that question a lot lately. "I think, also, when you go into the fourth year, you've already covered a great deal of ground, emotionally and story-wise."

But Bernheim also believes they've risen to the challenge. In the season premiere, Sam leaps into Lee Harvey Oswald, an episode which, she says, is creator/executive producer Donald Bellisario's "answer to *JFK* on a TV budget."

Other "high-concept" segments coming up include the writer's own "Evil Leaper" story, about "a woman leaping around time trying to undo all the good Sam has done. Just in the throes of completing the first draft," Bernheim can't promise the final episode will end up as

Photo: Courtesy Robin Bernheim



"I think I got lucky," says writer/producer Robin Bernheim of her career.

initially envisioned, but "we're trying hard not to reveal where she comes from or who she is. We're hoping that if we find a good actress, we can bring her back."

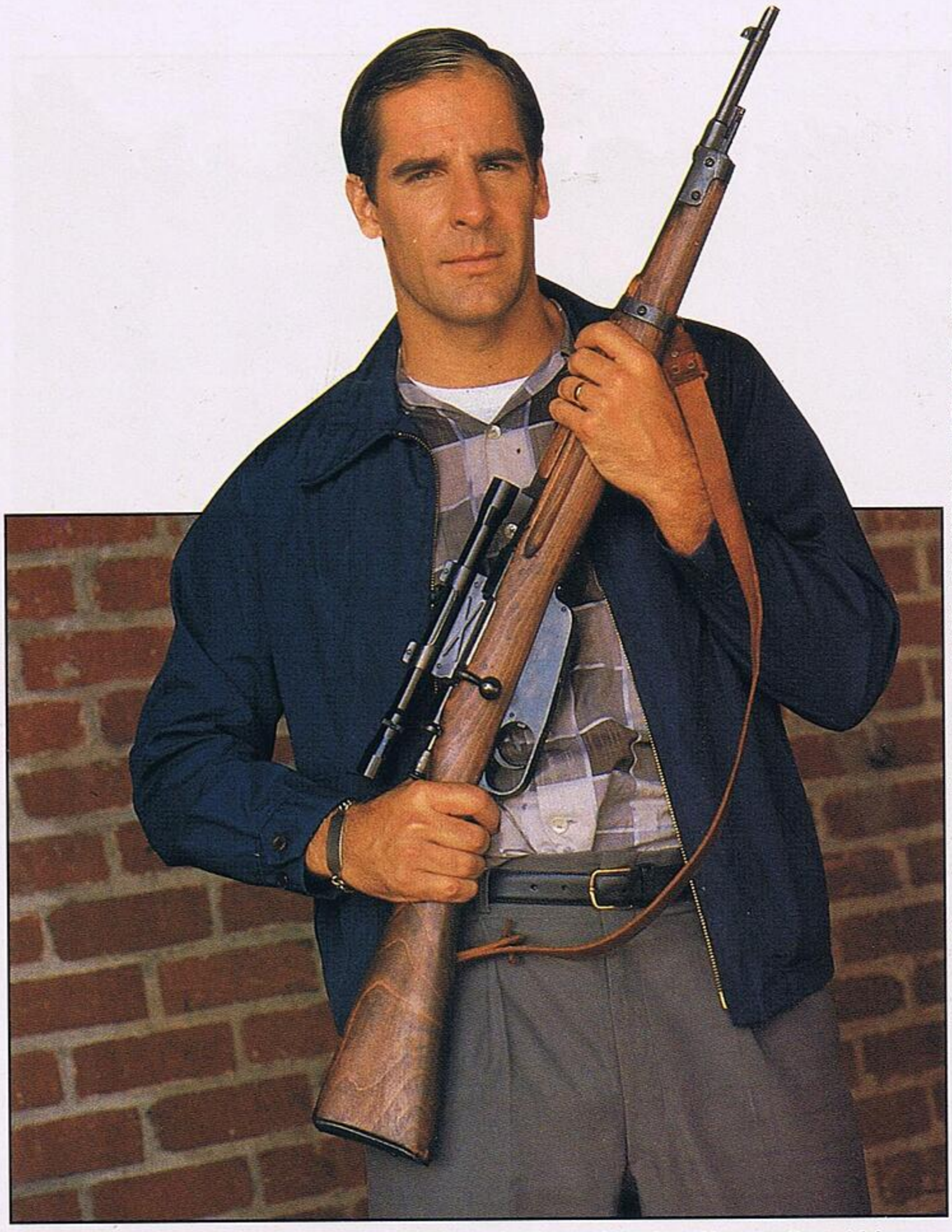
She's also enthusiastic about an episode that plays on the notion that when Sam leaps into a person, their soul is sent to an ethereal place called "the waiting room" until he completes his mission and they can return to their own body. In this particular segment, Sam leaps into a serial killer whose soul escapes from the waiting room and into the future, leaving Sam trapped in the past—and in the man's body. And Al, Sam's holographic cohort (Dean Stockwell), must chase the killer down in the future.

And there's even a light-hearted episode in the works in which Sam leaps into a sex therapist—Dr. Ruth Westheimer, to be specific.

"There's some mileage to be gained using Ruth as a cameo," Bernheim says. "That's not exactly resorting to *Love Boat*-type casting; it's just a good tongue-in-cheek touch. The meat of the episode is Sam—who's such a wholesome guy—as a sex therapist. Dr. Ruth is just icing on the cake and a promotable spin."

Brooke Shields is also tentatively slated to guest star in an episode Bernheim and producer Richard Okie have written where Sam is adrift with "a real snob. It's *Taming of the Shrew* set on a life raft and a desert island."

Quantum Leap is, in Bernheim's mind, essentially an anthology show, and—at least to her—a science fiction series. But that's not the way series creator Bellisario (STARLOG #150) sees it.



All Quantum Leap Photos: Copyright 1990, 1991, 1992 Universal City Studios/NBC

Photo: Paul Drinkwater/NBC

Sam (Scott Bakula) again makes history as he leaps into Lee Harvey Oswald in *Quantum Leap*'s season premiere.

"Don Bellisario says it's *not* SF. If it's not, let me say this: It's obviously fiction and has elements of science. We're dealing in semantics," she says. "I think *Quantum Leap* definitely falls into fantasy. It's not a show grounded in reality!"

Writing Leaps

Bernheim began her career working on a series just a bit more realistic than *Quantum Leap*. Once she had made the decision to become a writer, she sought the advice of her old friend Stephanie Zimbalist, who was starring in *Remington Steele*. Her advice? "Write a script with *me*." They did, a madcap mystery about a chocolate chip cookie containing no calories and the murder of its inventor. Then-unknowns Geena Davis and Jean Smart were the guest stars.

The writer is realistic about why she got that first, big break. "We were given an assignment because Stephanie was the show's star. They were rooting for us, but they were expecting nothing."

Fortunately for everyone involved, the script turned out well. The next hurdle for Bernheim was proving she could do it alone.

"I was nervous about writing by myself. The biggest favor Stephanie did for me was to *not* write with me again—she couldn't with her schedule," she says. "But when you've worked with a partner, you have to prove yourself all over again."

It was *Remington Steele* creator/producer Michael Gleason who "gambled on me, recognizing I equally contributed to that script" and gave her another assignment. That led to staff writer jobs for *Crazy Like a Fox* and later *MacGyver*. "I wrote the season opener for the second season of *MacGyver* and quit. I *hated* it there. On my last day, at 6 p.m., I'm packing up my stuff and the phone rings," she says. "It was Michael Gleason, wanting to know how much longer they had me for. I said two minutes."

LEE GOLDBERG, veteran STARLOG correspondent, is the author of Unsold TV Pilots *(Citadel, $12.95) and a writer/producer of Fox's* Unlikely Suspects. *He profiled Mariette Hartley in issue #180.*

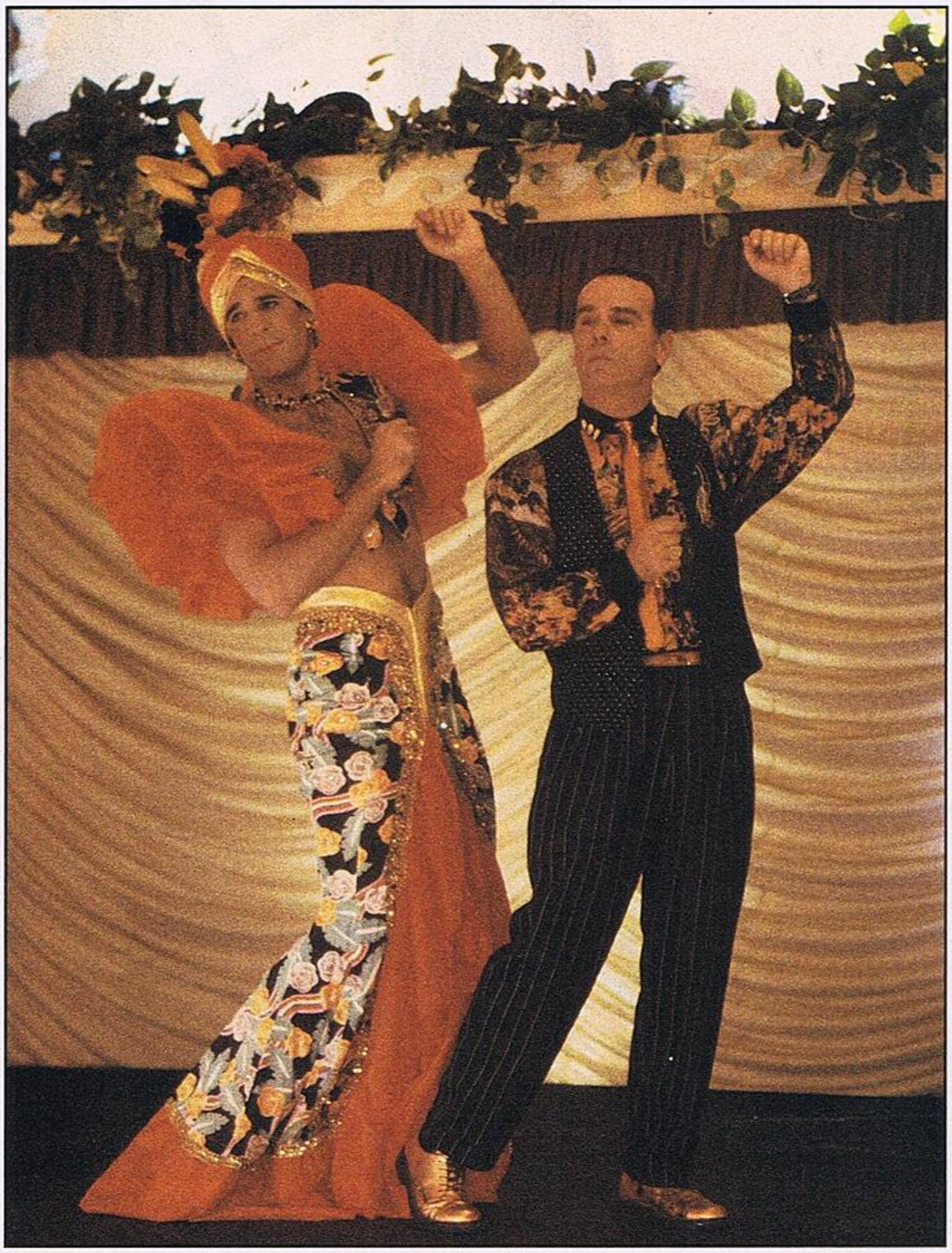


Photo: Paul Drinkwater/NBC

The upcoming season will have Sam in drag once again—as Dr. Ruth Westheimer. Let's see if Al (Dean Stockwell) can cha-cha through that one.

Beauty & Beast Photo: Randy Tepper/CBS

"It was a matter of letting all the stops out, which was a relief," Bernheim says of writing for *Beauty & the Beast*.

She signed on as story editor of *Remington Steele*, and when the show was cancelled, spent a season on *Matlock* before hitting the freelance market and landing an assignment on *Beauty & the Beast*.

"I pitched the voodoo show; that's what I call it," she says. "It was basically that someone into voodoo sucked Catherine [Linda Hamilton] into it. I forget what the guy wanted out of her, but Catherine was investigating a ritualistic murder. The villain knew she was looking into it, so he sucked her into his spell. He basically made her fall in love with him."

For Bernheim, the fun of doing the series was the rare opportunity to write a Gothic romance.

"It was a matter of letting all the stops out, which was a relief. It wasn't so much about plot. In a way, it was easier," she says. "The hardest thing to write is a closed mystery like *Remington Steele*. Not to demean it, but the story conferences on *Beauty & the Beast* were three hours. When you do other shows, you spend weeks and weeks hammering out a story. With this kind of writing, you futz with it a bit, but once you get its thrust, it's going to be in the writing, *not* the plotting."

She had sold another idea to *Beauty & the Beast*—about a young *Dungeons & Dragons* fan who, to his great delight, discovers the underground and thinks it's his

"Being a writer was my dream."

fantasy world come to life—but was hired as a producer for *Houston Knights* before she could write it. Although other writers tackled it, it was ultimately never shot. "It was a terrific idea, and it would have made a great, great episode."

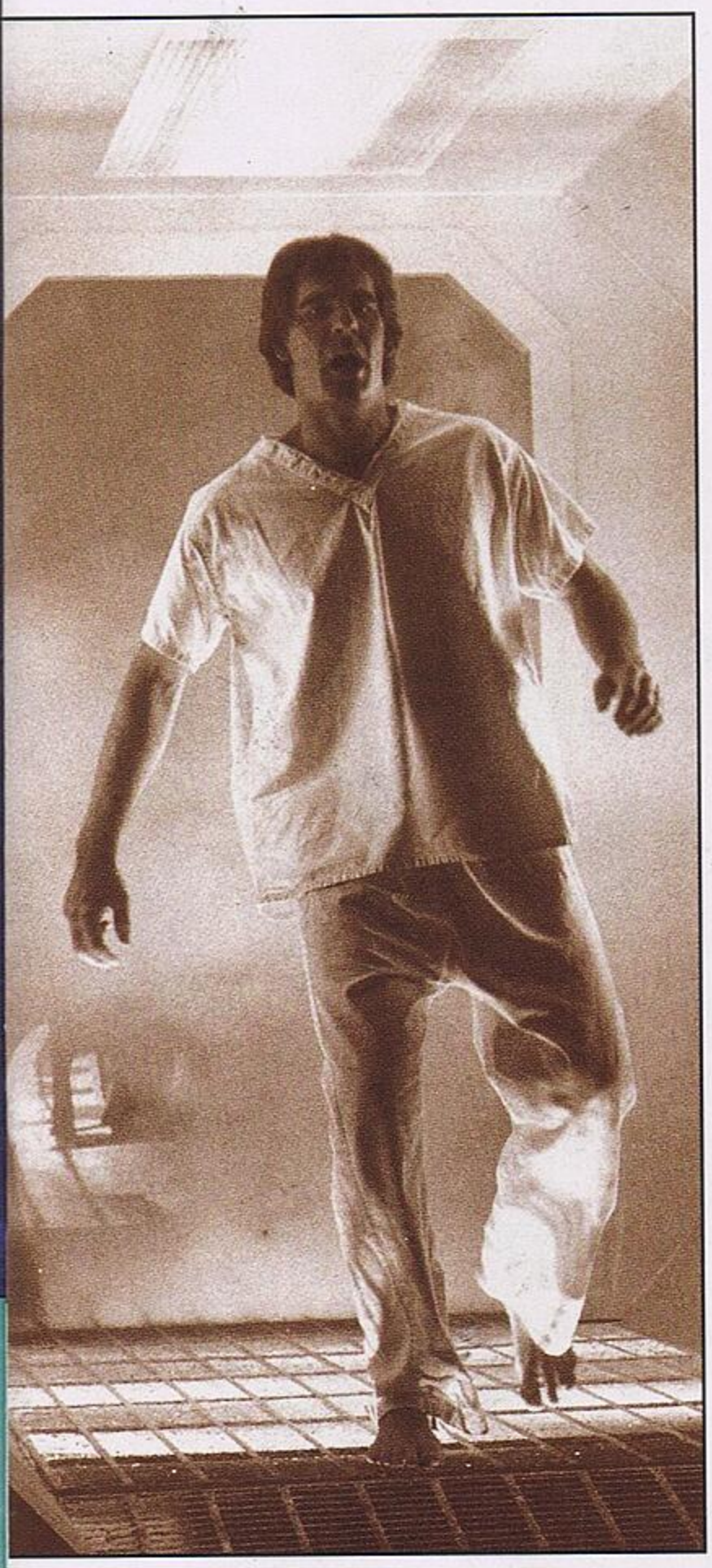
Houston Knights was a "crappy show" she would rather forget, and after its mercifully-short life, Bernheim was invited to pitch to producers Richard Manning and Hans Beimler at *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. That alone was a "dream come true" for this self-professed Trekker.

"In college, *Star Trek* was on twice a day and I watched both showings," she recalls. "I went to see all of the *Star Trek* movies. My favorite is *The Wrath of Khan*, but I could watch them tie their shoes. I remember telling my agent, 'I don't care if it's freelance, I want to write for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. I want to say I wrote for *Star Trek*.' "

Generation Leaps

She pitched several concepts, one that didn't sell which she still remembers as "a good idea about a woman who comes from another race which can predict the future, so she must be totally isolated on the ship. In fact, her planet was completely isolated because the Federation realized that knowledge about the future could change it. And so she goes on board and there was going to be a love story with

Photo: Ron Tom



In last season's premiere, "The Leap Back: June 15, 1999," Sam jumped home and into the unexpected.

Photo: Gary Null

Though creator/producer Don Bellisario doesn't consider *Quantum Leap* SF, Bernheim notes, "It's not a show grounded in reality!"

Riker. The *Enterprise* delivers her to where they have to and Riker says, 'I will never see you again,' and she says, 'Don't be so sure.' "

However, the script Bernheim sold was, "The Hunted," an allegory for the treatment of Vietnam vets after the war.

"The story I really wanted to do was the one I got to do," she recalls. "A planet is seeking admission to the Federation, and Riker and Picard go down to talk to its leader. While they're there, there's a prison break, and the *Enterprise* is sent to intercept the prisoners' vessel. One prisoner outwits the starship and escapes, so it becomes a matter of capturing the guy. They capture him, bring him on board, and he escapes again.

"The story is that he's a super-warrior—the society had altered some people to be soldiers and sent them off to fight a war, which they lost. When the war was over, these soldiers had trouble assimilating into the culture, so they were banished to a prison colony. But it wasn't really a penal colony, just a place to put people with violent tendencies—tendencies the society itself created."

Although the final episode ended up almost exactly as she wrote it, there was a "fairly major rewrite" due to production concerns. "The essence of the story was the same, but the mechanics and set pieces changed," she says. "I originally wrote some incredible set pieces which they couldn't do. In the original draft, the soldier [Roga] makes it to one of the shuttle bays, gets into a shuttlecraft and blasts through the doors when Picard won't open them. There was no way they could afford to do it. I believe what he did in the [finished] episode is that he made his way to a transporter room and beamed aboard another ship, and that's how he got away."

Bernheim found writing for *Star Trek* very difficult, but *not* because it was science fiction. "Writing a closed mystery is the hardest in terms of craft and brain power, but *Star Trek* is hard because there are so many rules," she says. "You're given stacks of documents to read—ship specs, rules you can't break—besides all the character biographies and all that. The ins and outs of the show's technicalities are tough. They made that ship so darn large. You have to deal with questions like, 'What deck is Engineering on? Is that accessible from where the character is?' "

Writing for *Star Trek* isn't like writing typical fiction based in the "real" world. "Everything in *Star Trek* is fiction. You must stick real close to their fictional rules. Their show bible is the size of a script, and the tech manual's like a book!"

Professional Leaps

Although other work prevented her from going back to *The Next Generation*, she did receive a letter some years later from the executive producers while producing a short-lived Bellisario series for CBS called *Tequila and Bonetti*.

"They sent a letter to anyone who ever wrote an episode. They seemed to be out of

(continued on page 70)

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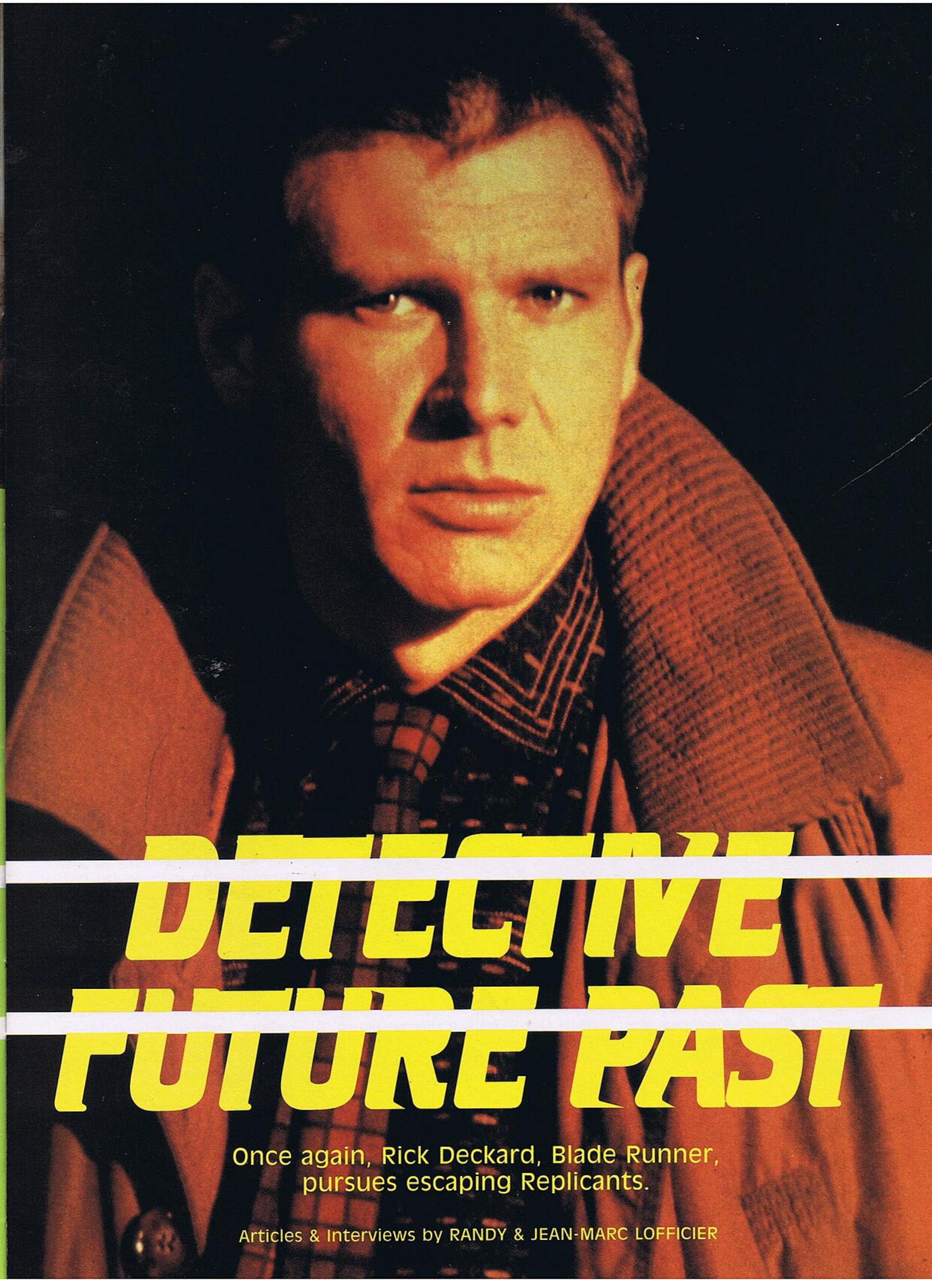
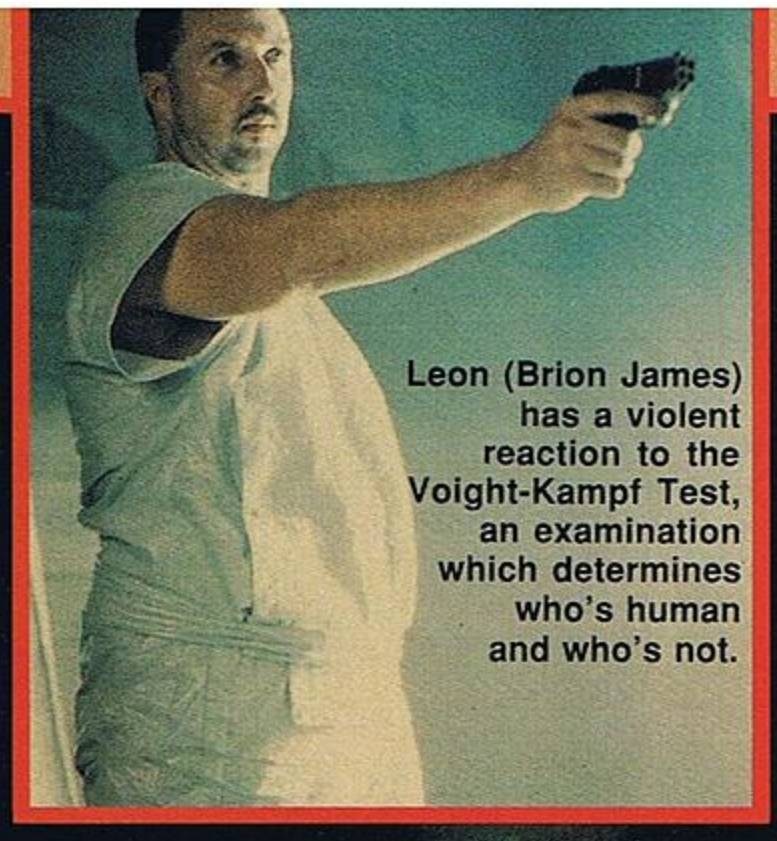


DETECTIVE FUTURE PAST

Once again, Rick Deckard, Blade Runner,
pursues escaping Replicants.

Articles & Interviews by RANDY & JEAN-MARC LOFFICIER



Leon (Brion James) has a violent reaction to the Voight-Kampf Test, an examination which determines who's human and who's not.

Hampton Fancher adapted Philip K. Dick's novel. He believes *Blade Runner*, at its heart, is a love story between Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) and Rachael (Sean Young).

Co-writer Hampton Fancher is also credited as executive producer of Blade Runner *because he is the man who, in 1975, conceived of turning the book into a film.*

He's an actor who appeared in 10 movies and some 100 TV shows. Blade Runner *was his first script. Although his attention was directed to Dick's novel in 1975, Fancher had to wait until 1978, when rights to the book (previously under another option) became available again. Fancher previously discussed writing* Blade Runner *in STARLOG #58.*

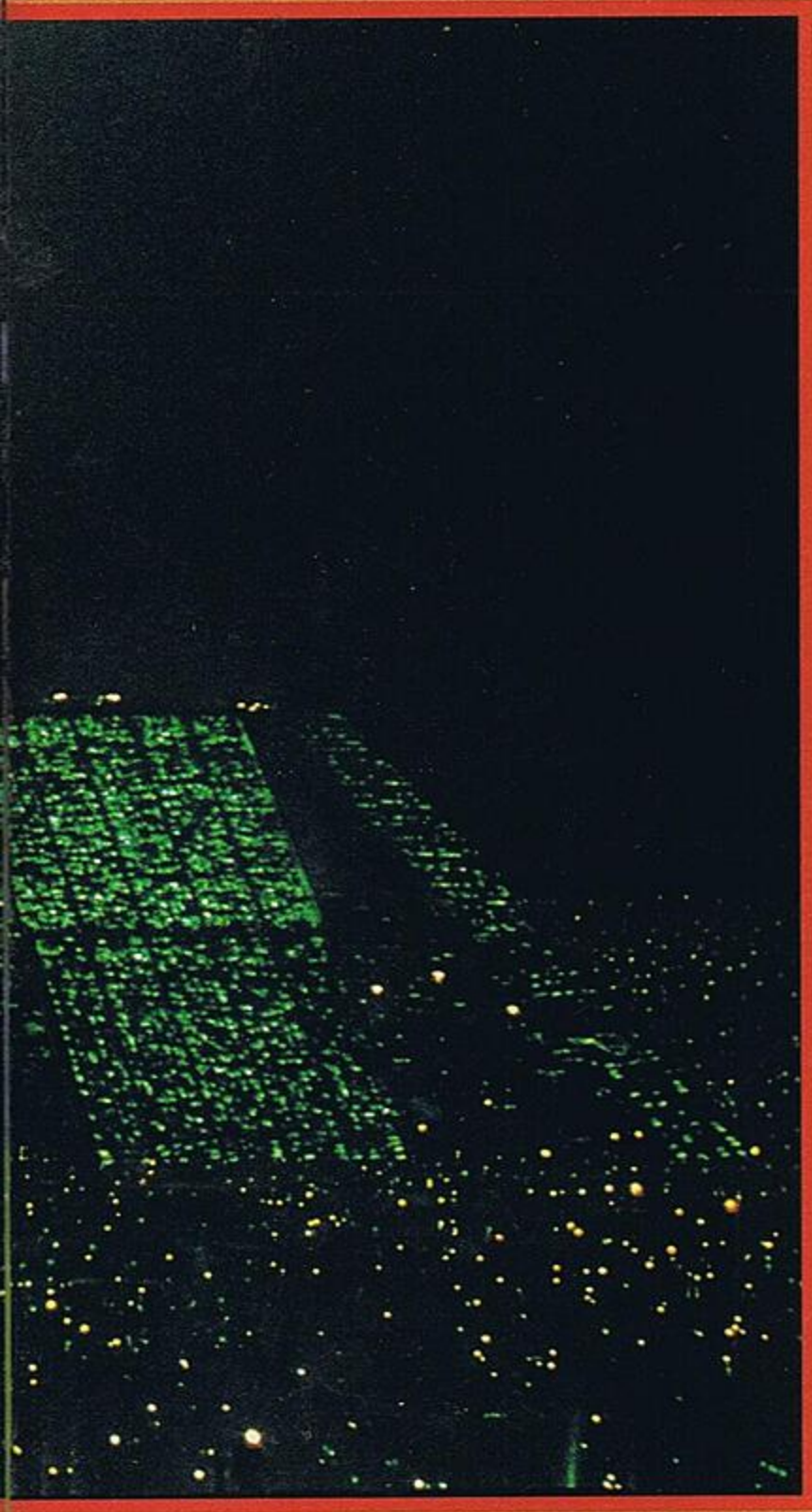
STARLOG: What first attracted you to *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

HAMPTON FANCHER: I had been what you might call an underground filmmaker, and never got a chance to get anything that I had written, and that I wanted to direct, off the ground. Over the years, I eventually learned that the way to do that was to do something that was commercially feasible. It was around 1975, and I decided to look for a property that had some kind of commercial feasibility. I'm *not* a science fiction fan, and I am ignorant of science fiction, but someone suggested that I read *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* I saw in it a possibility.

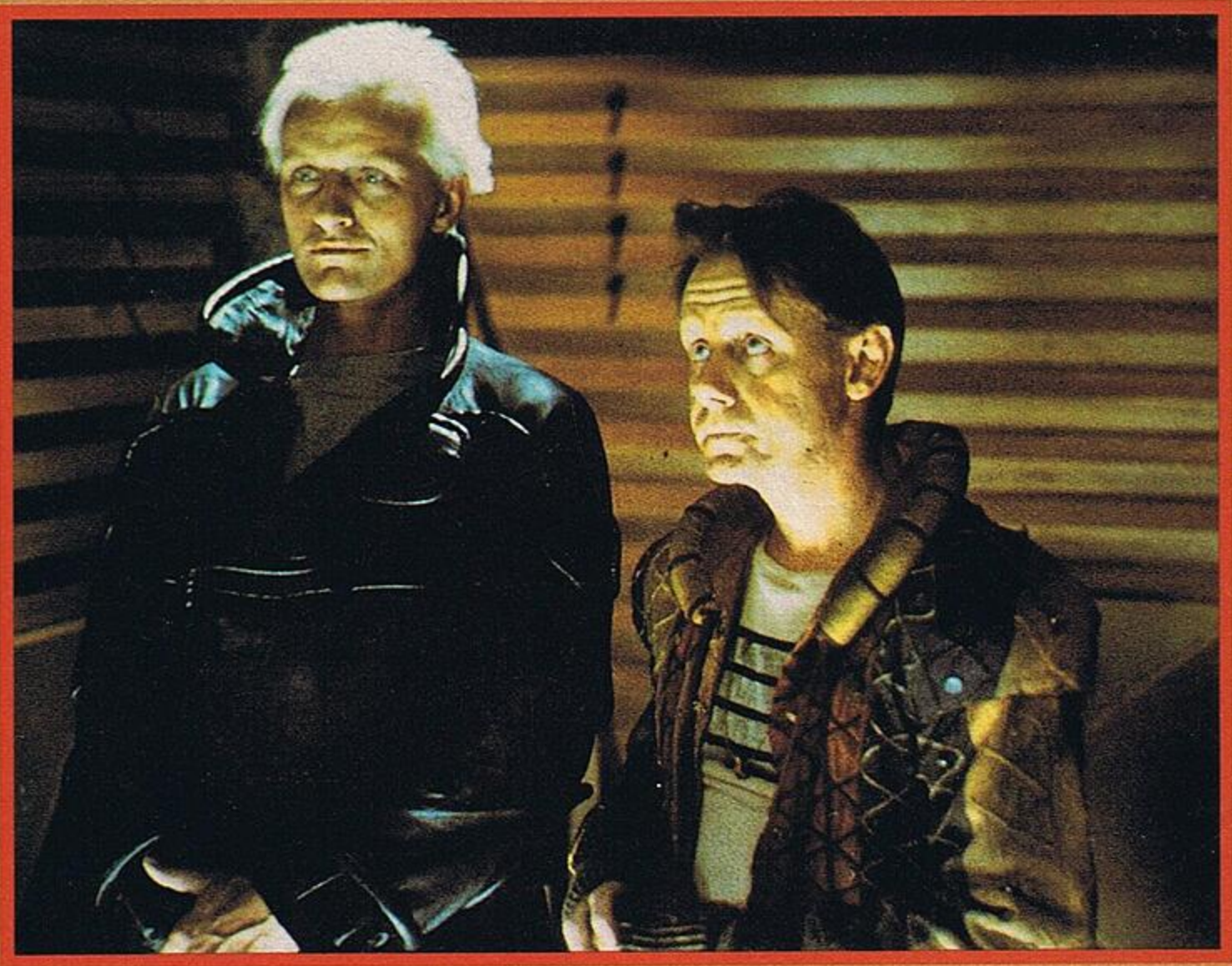
I didn't think of writing it or directing it. I just thought that, if I got something like that going as a producer, it would put me into more familiar ground with front-office Hollywood. So, I decided to option the book.

Philip Dick turned out to be *very* elusive. His agent didn't even know where he was. I ran into Ray Bradbury one day, after I had given up trying to find Dick, and he gave me Dick's phone number. So, I called him. But Dick was very suspicious of Hollywood, and of me. I met him, and we had three meetings over a few weeks. Even though we made contact, he continued to be elusive, and though we liked each other, I felt that he thought I was a "Hollywood" producer. But I wasn't; I was just a filmmaker trying to do this because I felt it could be an interesting film. I didn't have an approach to it. I was naive enough to think that *he* might!

We didn't get anywhere, and finally, I dropped it. Then, a few years later, in 1978, a friend of mine, Brian Kelly, the movie's other executive producer, was looking for something to do. I just mentioned the book to him, saying to do it if he could. He succeeded rapidly! I guess Dick needed the money. There was nothing like what I went through. He



Replicant Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer) and his human friend Sebastian (William Sanderson) speed toward a meeting with their creators.



All Blade Runner Art & Photos: Copyright 1982 The Ladd Company

just called the agent, and within a day, he owned the property.

Brian was a fairly well-known actor [from the *Flipper* TV series], but had to drop out of acting after a motorcycle accident paralyzed him on the right side. He wanted something to do, and films were his love. At that point in time, he had made two films with Michael Deeley, the producer, in Europe. So, Brian took the property to Deeley, who read the book and said, "No way!"

Do Androids Dream... wasn't the kind of thing that even someone who's professionally involved could *easily* picture as a film. Dick is very obscure and purposefully ambiguous in his writing; maybe it would take a filmmaker to understand *how* to deal with it. I didn't even see how to deal with all the components. I just saw one simple thing that you could hang a lot onto, and which I thought would be intriguing: The "bounty hunter chases androids" theme. There's a Kafkaesque atmosphere about the book that I enjoyed. But there was also a whiff of something else in the book that I thought could be turned into something close to my heart. I didn't think that then, at least not consciously, but I must have subconsciously done so, or else I wouldn't have pursued it.

But I didn't have anything to do with it at that point. Then, Brian came back to me and explained that Deeley didn't like the book, and he didn't understand how it could be done as a movie. "What can I tell him?" Brian asked. I told him to say this and that. So, he asked me to write it down as an outline, which I did. It was basically a simplification of the novel in eight pages. He gave it to Deeley, who said no again. Brian came back to me distraught, and I felt guilty that I had talked him into spending $2,000.

Then, Brian entreated me into doing, if not a screenplay, at least a treatment. I refused at first, but Barbara Hershey, the actress, who knew about all of this, told me it was a perfect way to achieve what I was trying to do. If I believed that this was what I wanted to do, and if I wanted to make it happen, why didn't I write it? So, I made a 50/50 deal with Brian, and I started work on the first draft.

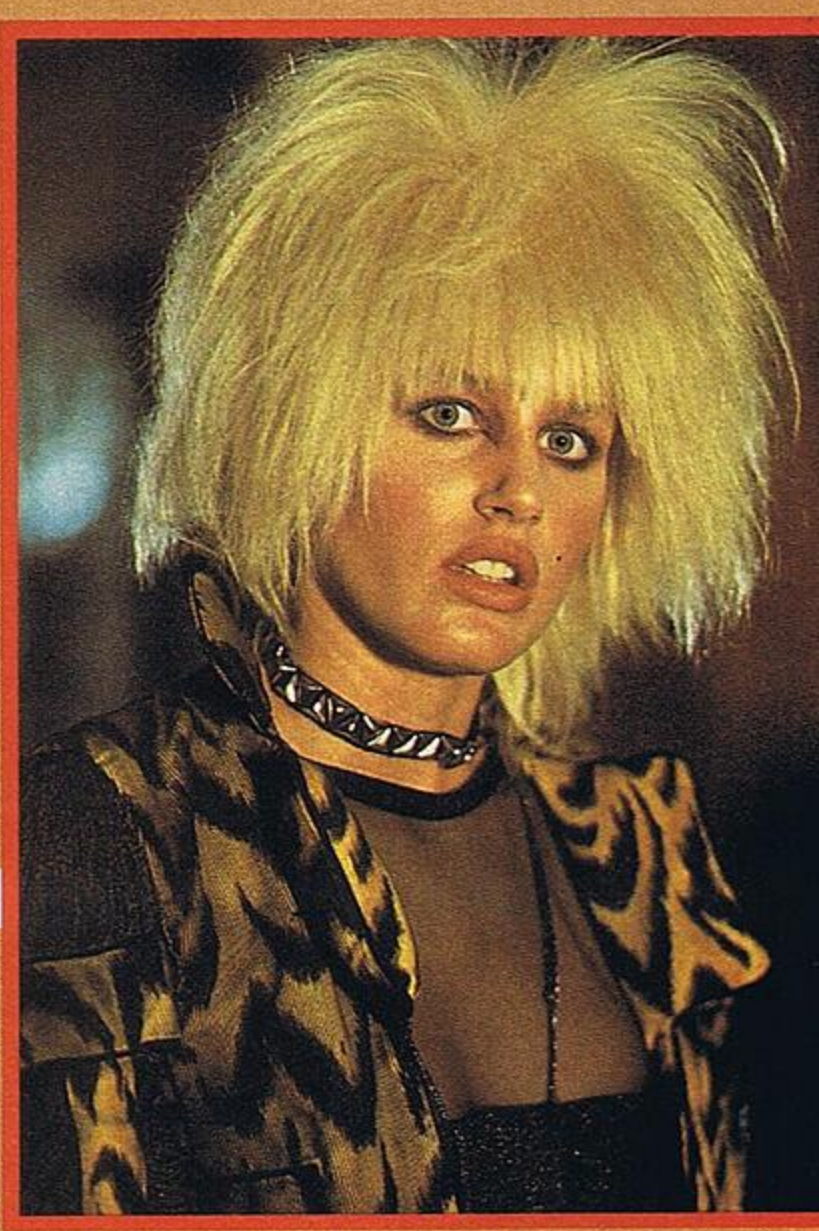
The first two drafts were very much in keeping with the book's themes. A problem that you can run into in Hollywood is that, if it reads well, they don't know how to deal with it! But Deeley fell in love with it, and he made us feel that we had it made, and we felt that we had a producer with a lot of power, because he had just won an Academy Award [for *The Deer Hunter*] and many people were romancing him.

Still, none of the studios would say yes. I realized later that we were going to make a movie that *nobody* understood. There were four or five drafts. I lost my naivete and got more experienced in what was needed, and adapted scenes that were in the first drafts into better substance.

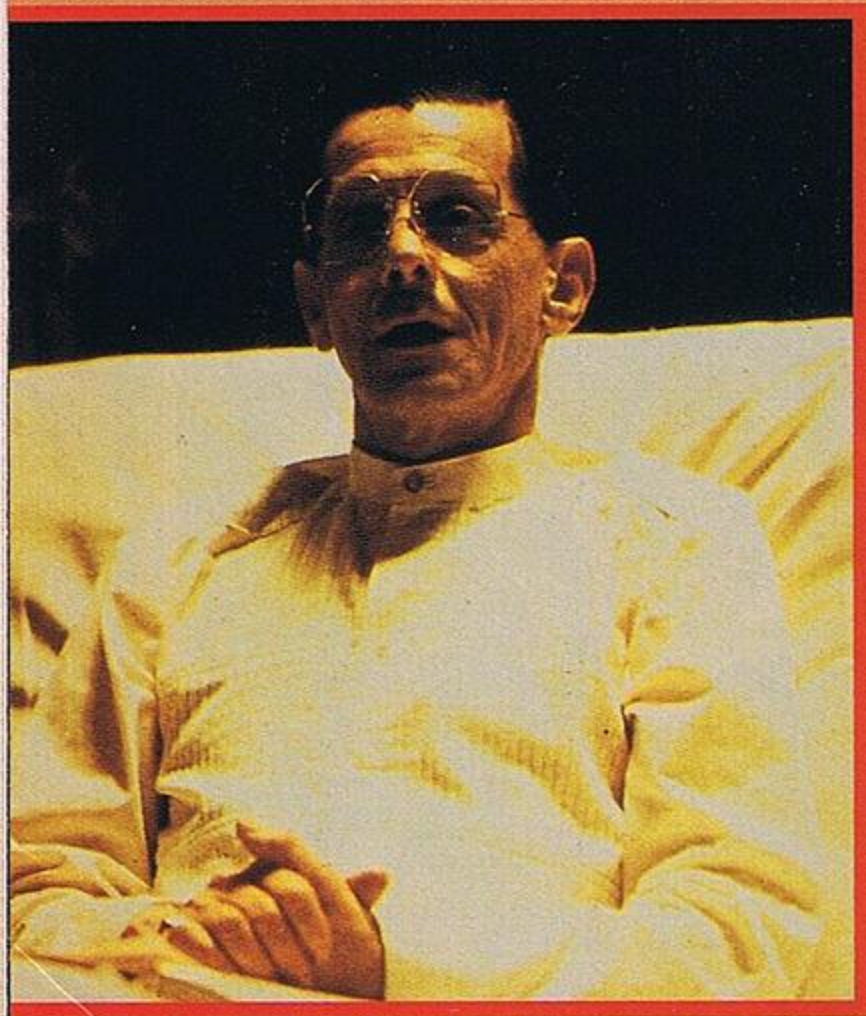
STARLOG: Did you leave out the book's religion of Mercerism, for instance?

FANCHER: I don't think Mercerism even got past the first draft. I was going to put it back in, but didn't because I finally didn't know what to do with it. The next thing that went—and that was terrible for me, for I still love these old drafts—was Buster Friendly, and what I had done with him.

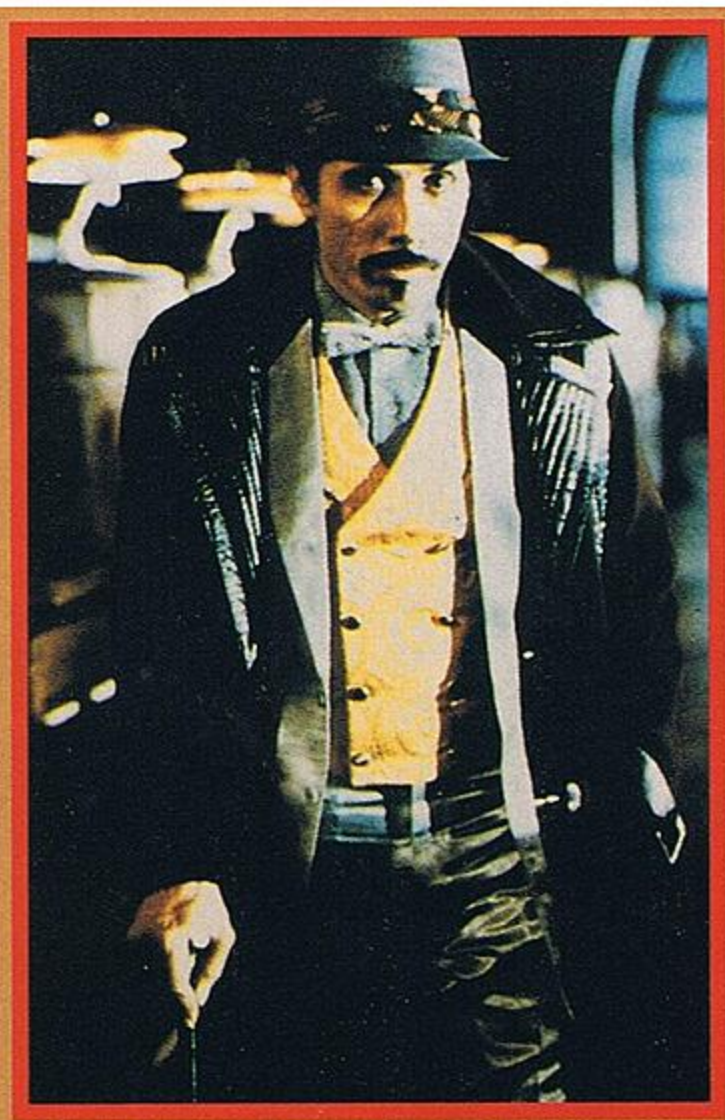
Basically, at that point, the plot was that of a man trying to get enough money to buy himself a real goat. That was still in when Ridley came on. Everybody liked it, but they were *afraid*



Lovely Pris (Darryl Hannah) is a pleasure machine, but the film wonders, does she *not* also deserve life?



Tyrell (Joe Turkel) is the creator, father to Replicants.



Gaff (Edward James Olmos) has an affection for paper animals.

One specialist (James Hong) only does eyes. In turn, the Replicants do him in.

of it. I was dealing with people who didn't have the same commitment to Mother Earth. It was a bitter struggle and it took a year! In a sense, they won, but in another sense, the educational process for me in terms of writing was worth it. Eventually, I came up with a much more important theme, which was even closer to my heart: The empathy theme, what's wrong with man.

STARLOG: You mean that Deckard's character changed from someone looking to buy an animal, to someone who's now questioning his concepts of what's right and what's wrong?

FANCHER: Right! I was always trying for that, but I finally got it more simplified and defined. It got so good by the last script I thought I was in good shape! What got refined in the last three drafts was the theme of a man who was questioning his own conscience, or lack of one, and that the very thing the hero was trying to kill for being a machine, was in fact, less mechanical than he was!

It was that discovery of his own soul, falling in love with the thing he had to kill. It was an agonizing process for that man, and a dramatic one too.

STARLOG: How did Ridley Scott get involved?

FANCHER: There were four drafts written, and a very fine director came in for awhile, but had trouble with the studio we were dealing with at the time, Universal. That's Robert Mulligan, whom I respected a lot, and who was very neat to work with [Mulligan directed *Summer of '42*, *The Other*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*]. We did one draft together, and then we couldn't make sense financially with Universal. So, Mulligan left, and then we left Universal. They weren't committed yet, and they wanted a "Happy Ending." Mulligan and I wouldn't do it.

Right around that time, Ridley, who had been sent the script and liked it, but didn't want to do another SF picture, changed his mind and decided to do it. He, of course, was the reason the movie got made. We were in trouble because everyone said, "You've got to have a director, because this is too weird a film. You need a director to insure its value."

It was true in a sense. Two days after Ridley got into town and talked to us, every studio in town called and said, "How much do you want, and when do you want to go?" So, we made a deal with Filmways, and then they went, "Pffft!" Ridley is very imaginative and many-faceted, quirky and fun to work with, but difficult to tie down. I found myself getting excited about many things, and disliking many other things. We had a real basic disagreement on certain sentiments. It was an arduous process, as well as a fulfilling one, and certainly a very educational one.

STARLOG: Was there no way to work out these problems?

FANCHER: No way! I didn't think that, because Ridley never made me think that. On a dialectical level, when it came to those areas that I disagreed on, and felt justified in disagreeing, I would usually win the argument and feel satisfied that my point had been proven. But two or three weeks later, we would have the *same* argument all over again! He was just steadfastly hooked into wanting things that *I* wouldn't do.

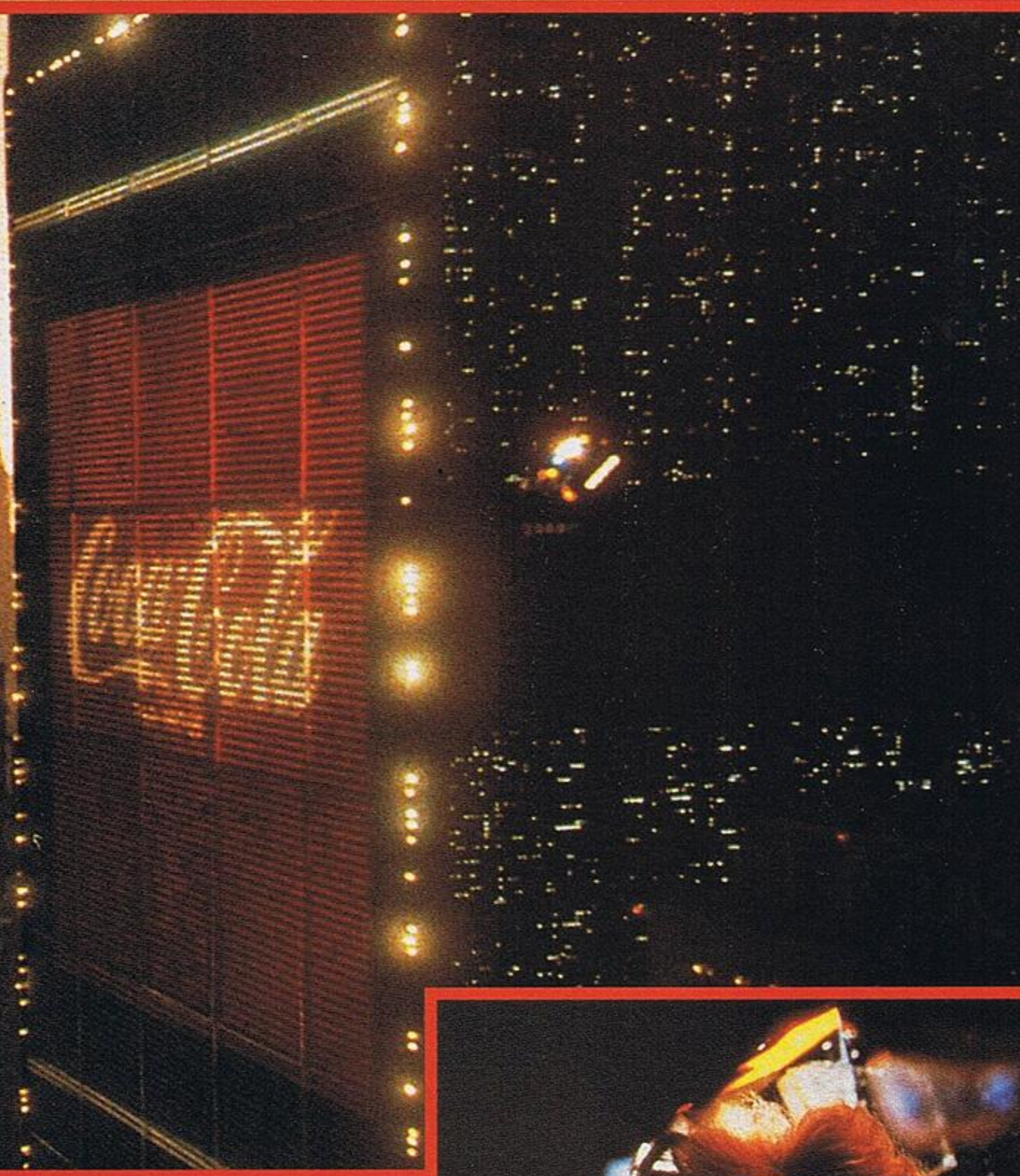
As pre-production began, and things really had to be nailed down, it got really hairy! I wasn't a hired writer, so it wasn't as if Ridley could say to me, "Do this and that," and I would do it. I was also a producer. Finally, I said—because it was Ridley's film in the end—"If you're going to do that, you're going to have to get somebody else to do it, because I *won't*!"

I didn't think he would do it, because the time was too short. We came up with what *I* thought, and what many people think, was a very wonderful script. It has all those things that I wanted. But they *did* get somebody else, and it turned out to be David Peoples, just about two weeks before shooting started.

At the time, of course, I was *very* disturbed, because I didn't know who David Peoples was. I thought that they had gotten a guy who was going to do anything Ridley wanted, and it was going to wreck the film.

Later, I found out that David did a really good job of translating Ridley's ideas into script. I was going to go into [Writer's Guild] arbitration about it. I didn't know whether I wanted my name or his name off [the screen credit], but I was going to do something about it, *until* I got the script. Then, I thought, "Hey, this guy is neat!" I really liked his work, and then, the animosity, jealousy and all that stuff disappeared. Now, we've become friends!

RANDY & JEAN-MARC LOFFICIER, veteran STARLOG correspondents, conducted these Blade Runner *interviews in 1982. Published (in part) only in France, these talks make their American debut this issue, albeit in abridged form. They will appear, unabridged, in the forthcoming* Making Movies 1980-90 *(McFarland, hardcover).*



Zhora (Joanna Cassidy) is the first to fall to Blade Runner Deckard.

What was disappointing was that I don't think even David's stuff came across, because of how it was tampered with by people who *weren't* writers, but producers, secretaries, associate producers, directors. There's a discombobulation, a lack of cohesion and coherency.

STARLOG: What do you think of *Blade Runner* being promoted as a detective story of the future?

FANCHER: That was Ridley's idea. That's the first idea that I gave in to. I hated it! What happened was that after literally three months of fighting, I gave in, and decided to fall in love with it instead, because it was, after all, a way to get everything through. It's a wonderful thing in a movie if you can, on a superficial level, get people to be hooked and then, just below that, have a message.

I was against it at first because I thought it was a cliché and very unoriginal, but when I saw his graphic ideas about how to handle it, in a kind of Gothic or Kafkaesque manner, I started to think, "Wouldn't it be interesting, we could have a voiceover narration and all that kind of character." I originally had Deckard as a little bureaucrat, a guy who wasn't too sure of himself, but then I thought that it was better to have an extremely macho guy and then have him cut down so he doesn't know where he's coming from.

That's what I started doing by the sixth draft, and eventually, I think I arrived at it in the last draft, number 10! But they didn't even go for that, and they left the underpart out. Ridley didn't want *any* vulnerability, but at the same time, he didn't make Deckard macho.

The deepest thing I had was the love story. I don't think they ever saw it as a love story. For me, the most noble person in the film, the person with the most to lose and who was willing to lose it, was Rachael. I liked matching her against a macho jerk who was totally sexist-oriented in that stupid detective way. Then, through her, he becomes otherwise—but he still loses her.

STARLOG: Why was the world changed from being empty to being overcrowded?

FANCHER: I guess it was just looking at New York, Mexico City and what's happening now. Which was a great idea!

Many of Ridley's visual and atmospheric concepts are interesting. My atmosphere was much more naive. I didn't really create much of a world. You could have pretty much taken my first draft and put it on a [theatrical] stage. There weren't many exterior scenes, there wasn't much hardware. It was basically a small drama being done for $9 million.

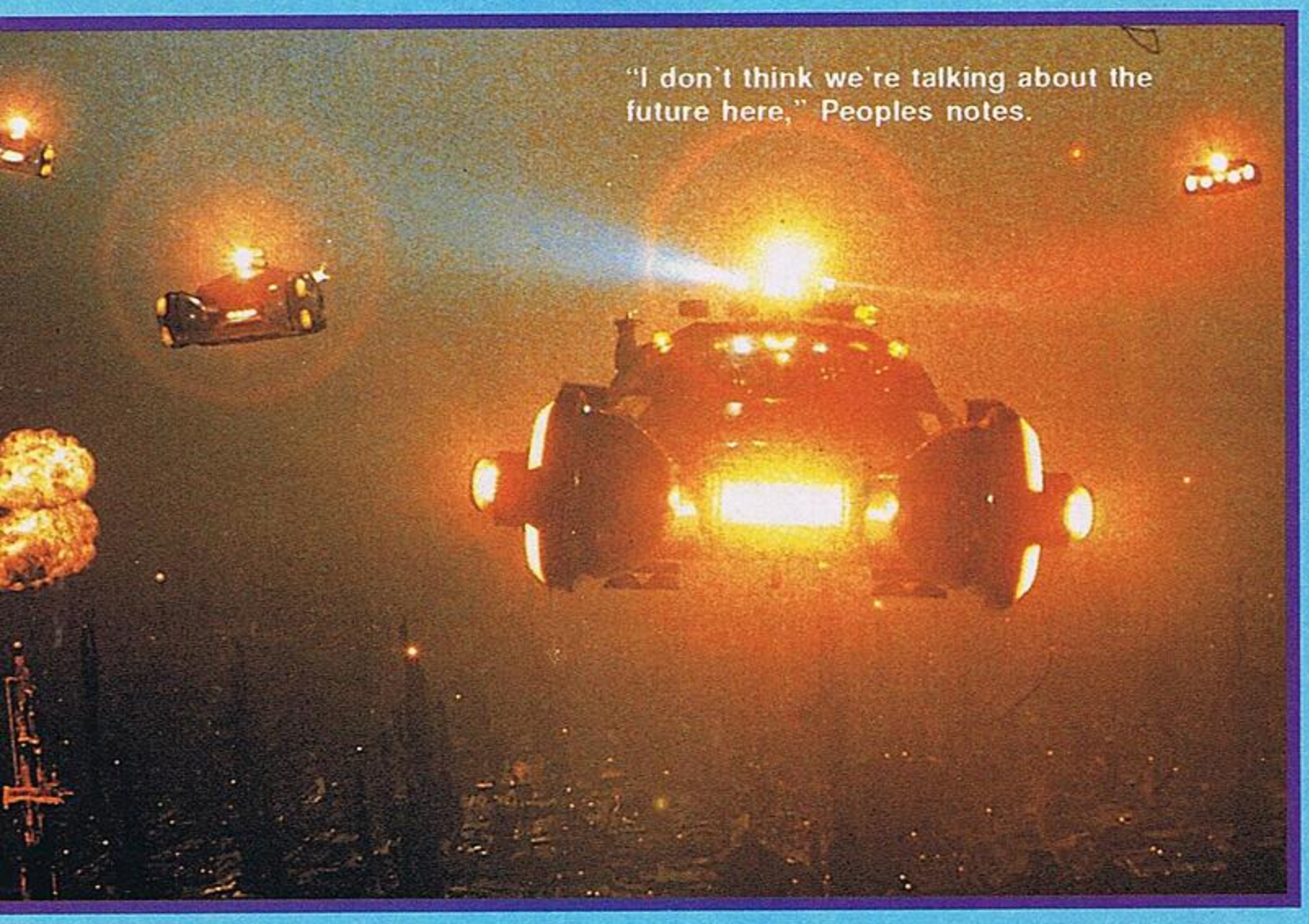
STARLOG: Do you agree with Dick's rather bleak view of the future?

FANCHER: Not necessarily, but bleakness to me is watching a tourist suck an ice cream cone!

Any kind of art that moves or inspires you, and has something that's bleak about it, can be a strong inspiration and can make your life bigger. Definitely everything I did up to the last draft was a warning. I had to have something I was saying, or else I couldn't have written it!

I wasn't advocating bleakness, of course, I was warning about it, and empathy had much to do with it. But there was, always, even in the bleakest of my drafts, a lesson that engendered hope.

I wanted the last moment to be a thrill. I like proposing some hard questions that way. ☆



"I don't think we're talking about the future here," Peoples notes.

Co-writer David Peoples co-wrote and co-edited an Academy Award-winning documentary feature, The Day After Trinity, *which chronicled the making of the first atomic bomb. He also wrote the Oscar-nominated short* Arthur and Lilly, *and edited the Oscar-winning documentary feature* Who are the DeBolts and Where Did They Get 19 Kids?

A man of many talents, Peoples' collaboration on Blade Runner *began in 1980, at Ridley Scott's request, before principal photography commenced. Peoples also discussed his work in STARLOG #58.*

STARLOG: How did you get involved?

DAVID PEOPLES: During the period I was doing documentaries, I had written several original screenplays. I was actually working on rewriting one of these with Tony Scott, Ridley's director brother [STARLOG #107], when Tony showed Ridley one of my screenplays and spoke well of me. Ridley must have liked my work, because he called me, and that's how I ended up on *Blade Runner*.

STARLOG: Did you work with Hampton Fancher on *Blade Runner*?

PEOPLES: No, I didn't meet Hampton until we had both finished working.

According to Peoples, director Ridley Scott is "the complete author of the movie. He dominates every frame."

STARLOG: Why did they bring you in as a writer?

PEOPLES: Hampton had reached a point where I don't believe he wanted to pursue it and make some of the changes that Ridley wanted. But he had written on it for a long time, and must have felt pretty tired of it. Also, there were some changes that I don't think he was very enthusiastic about. He just said that they should have somebody else make them, and Ridley thought I would be a good person to make them.

In many instances, I picked up right where Hampton had left off, and did probably exactly what he would have done. There was a scene between Deckard and another character where I found that Hampton's dialogue, which he had written months before and hadn't been picked up for one reason or another, was written *exactly* the way I *would* have written it!

STARLOG: Had you already read Dick's novel?

PEOPLES: No, and I didn't refer to his book when I was writing. I referred only to Hampton's screenplay. From my point-of-view, Hampton's script was what I was working from. The script that Hampton had written before I got there was absolutely brilliant. It was just wonderful! When I saw it, I was terrified! I thought I was going to embarrass myself because it was just so good! The changes I made were really to make it more in line with Ridley's vision.

It was definitely *not* the case of a bad screenplay being fixed up. Ridley has a very unique and brilliant vision of the world, and he wanted to fit more of that in there.

STARLOG: Had Ridley much input into the script?

PEOPLES: Absolutely! Ridley is the author of the movie in *every* sense of the word. He is a complete author. It's his movie and he dominates *every* frame of it with his way of looking at things.

STARLOG: How was working with him?

PEOPLES: He is very much a perfectionist, and you must work very hard. But he couldn't be more charming, or a more pleasant person to work with. Ridley surrounds himself with people who are pleasant people, and it's a wonderful atmosphere. He is also extraordinary in that he is open and receptive to ideas from everyone. He's always listening. He's polite enough to listen even when he knows he's going to do it differently!

STARLOG: Did you find *Blade Runner* difficult to write, considering the heavy emphasis on visuals?

PEOPLES: No. I didn't have that problem because Ridley was supervising at all times, and he understood the visual aspects perfectly. Sure, there were times when I didn't fully understand what I was doing, but Ridley always understood what he was doing and where he was going. I was doing what I was told to do, and it worked out fine.

STARLOG: Don't you think that spectacular visual FX tend to take away from a storyline or from the characters?

PEOPLES: Obviously, if they do, it screws up the movie. To a writer, of course, the story is *always* the important thing. But people go to the movies to see stories and spectacles, because you do have good stories on TV after all. So, there must be that balance where you're not only telling a good story, but you also have that sense of something special that makes it a movie and a theatrical experience rather than a television experience.

STARLOG: Did you have any problems writing scenes around sets that had already been built?

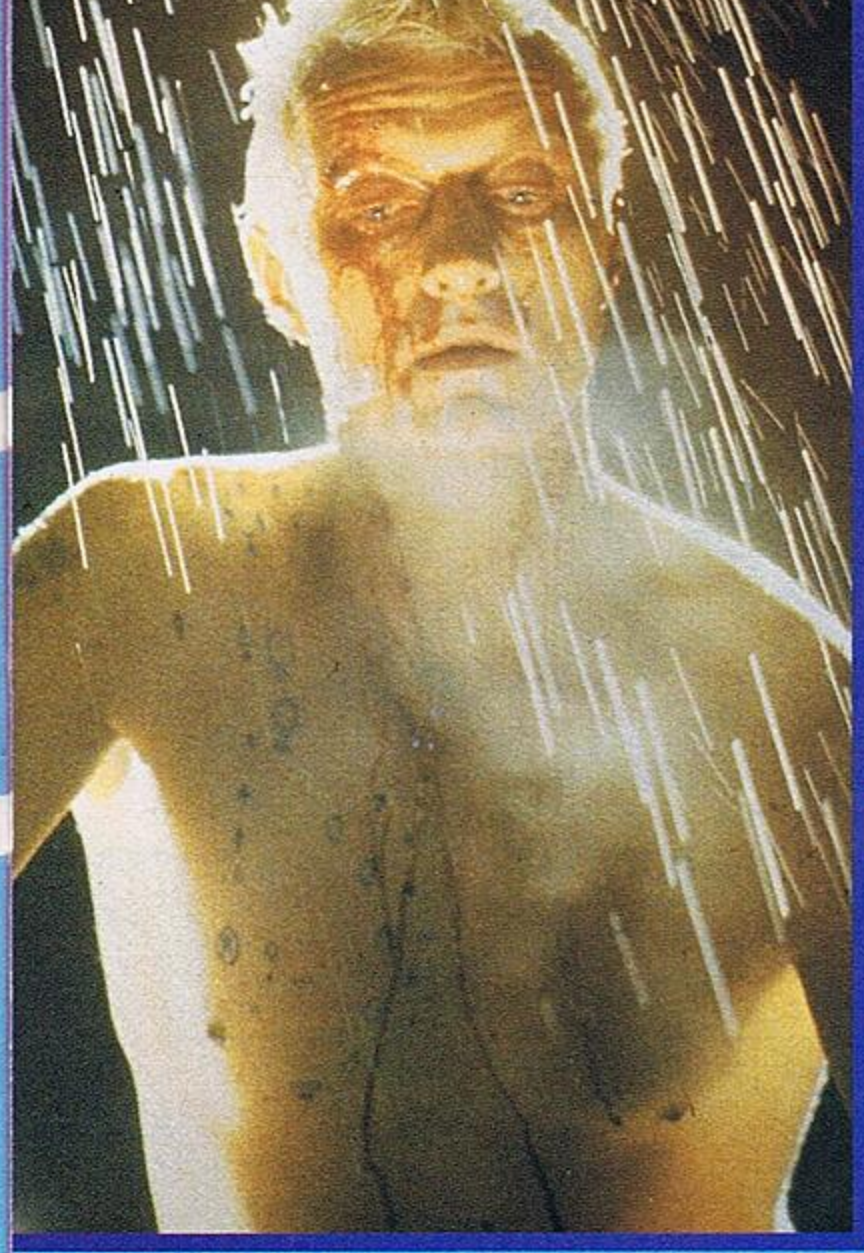
PEOPLES: All along, there were things that were absolutely locked into the story, because people had been working on building this and that and so on. There were times when I would want to write something one way, and the set had already been built another! It was a strange sensation to think that these things were happening even as you wrote the words down on the paper.

STARLOG: Was there heavy pressure to get the script done on time?

PEOPLES: Yes, there was a great deal of pressure because the sets were being built, the casting was underway, and the picture had to go on schedule because a certain amount of money was being spent every day, and you *couldn't* go into a holding pattern at that stage.

All Blade Runner Art & Photos: Copyright 1982 The Ladd Company

Screenwriter David Peoples calls *Blade Runner* a detective story. In his script revisions, he emphasized Rick Deckard's talent for detection.



For Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer), it's time to die. There was equal pressure on Peoples, revising the screenplay while sets were being built.

STARLOG: What do you think of Phil Dick's rather dark vision of the future?

PEOPLES: When people do scientific or future stories, what they're looking for is a way to talk about now. So, I don't think we're talking about the future here. I think people are looking at *now* in an exaggerated way.

So, when you talk about the future in *Blade Runner*, it's *not* a case of whether I agree with it or anything; it's a case of looking at the exaggeration of what's happening *now*. The cities in *Blade Runner* are bigger than the cities we have, but the cities we have are enormous! It's a way of seeing the present through different eyes. It's like an artists' rendering of something. If it strikes a chord in people and they say, "Yes, that's what's happening," then the artist has really gotten to the people.

That's where *Blade Runner* is different from something that's a fantasy like *Star Wars*, where you're released from the present. *Blade Runner* is more vital in some ways, because it is not a fantasy.

Alternatively, if you showed a bright vision that rang true, then that too would be one you could agree with. There isn't *one* single way of painting the world. This is an extraordinary vision, and I think people will find that *Blade Runner* strikes something in them.

STARLOG: What would you say is the film's point?

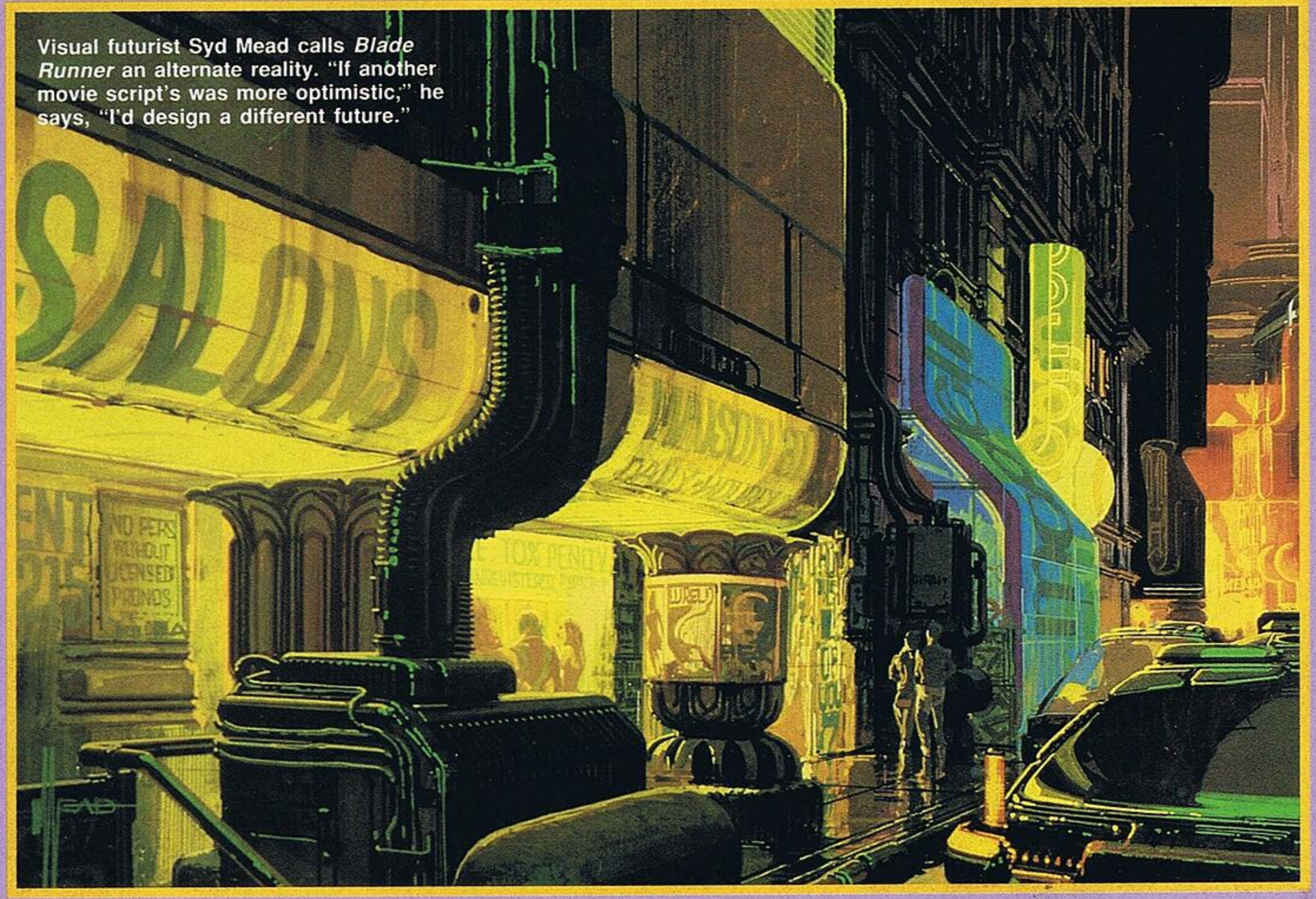
PEOPLES: The point that appealed to me was, when is a person no longer a person? Because he is *not* born from a womb?

STARLOG: Wouldn't you say that part of Dick's point was about the nature of reality? Like this obsession with the electric sheep?

PEOPLES: Ridley wanted to dwell on the animal theme, and I know Hampton's draft had a lot about it, but somehow we never found the proper way of making it an important part of the picture.

STARLOG: Is *Blade Runner* SF, or a detective story that just happens to occur in the future?

PEOPLES: It's a detective story all right, even more than it is SF. It's also a love story—all of that, but set in the future. I don't think it has ever been done before, at least in the movies. Unless you count *Alphaville*, and that's nothing like *Blade Runner*. ★



Visual futurist Syd Mead calls *Blade Runner* an alternate reality. "If another movie script's was more optimistic," he says, "I'd design a different future."

For Blade Runner, *Syd Mead designed a future. His work lends a credibility to the film's world. As design concept consultant (credited in the movie as Visual Futurist), Mead created the many visual representations of the future's machines and products.*

Mead, a famed industrial design consultant (his credits include Ford, Chrysler, US Steel and many others), contributed to Star Trek: The Motion Picture *and* TRON. *His book* Sentinel *presents a remarkable overview of his career. Mead previously outlined his work in STARLOG #58.*

STARLOG: Working on *Blade Runner* must have been a new experience.

SYD MEAD: Yes, I had never worked on a major production from zero to the finished print until this one. The little bit I did on *Star Trek*—designing V'Ger, its exterior, some concept sketches for the interior—was at the tail end of the movie. But with *Blade Runner*, I was involved from blank paper all the way through the end, which was exciting.

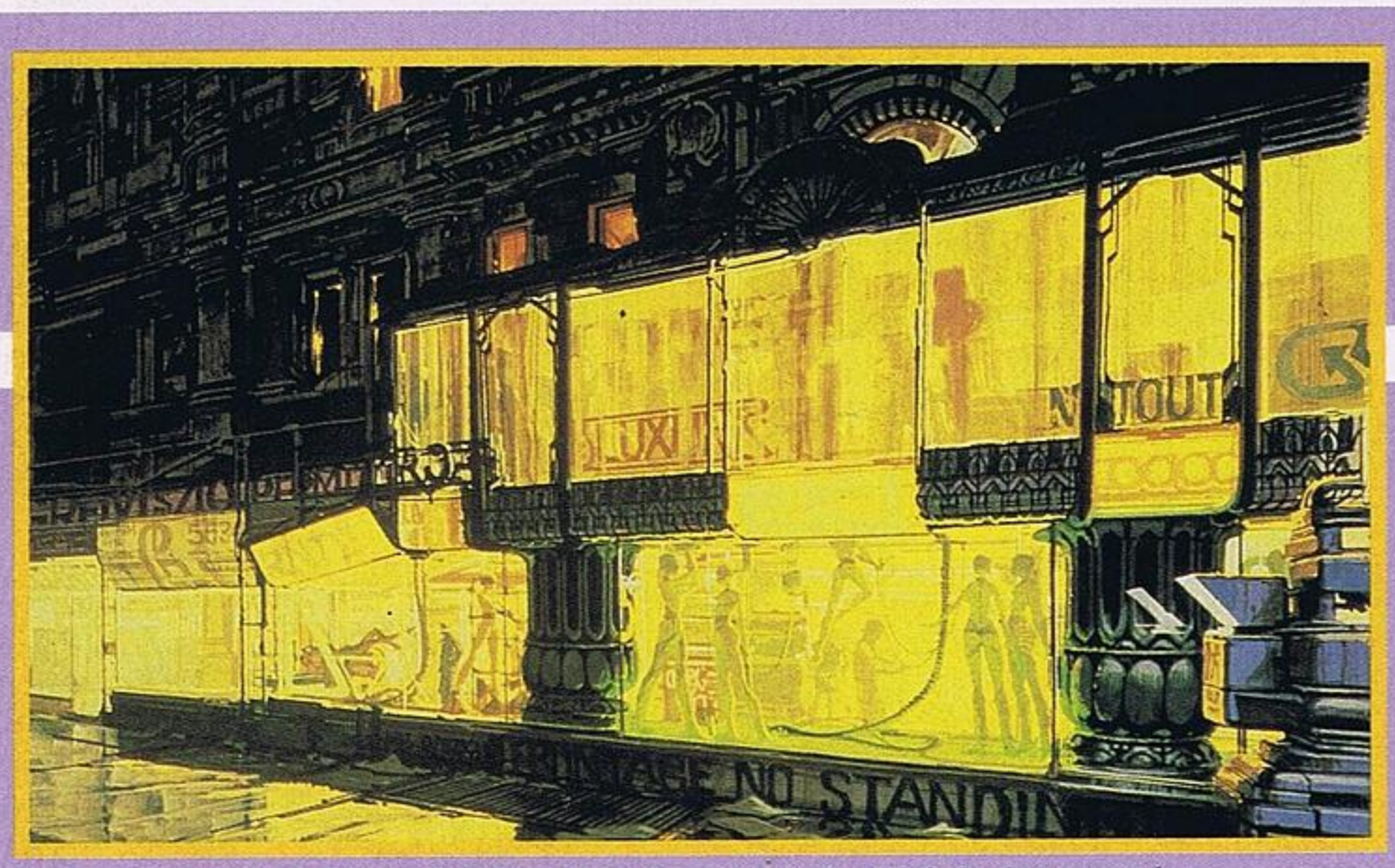
STARLOG: What is your background?

MEAD: It's primarily industrial design. I've been typecast as a vehicular, or a transport type of designer, but I've done product design and fantasy illustration. When Ridley Scott came to LA, I was hired to do five vehicles. They had to be started on right away because they took the longest to make. That was the reason for hiring me: The vehicles.

STARLOG: How did you grow to be more involved with the film?

MEAD: The first designs I submitted to Ridley and [production designer] Larry Paull. You see, I don't like to do sketches isolated on a white sheet. I like to bury the design into its setting so it looks like it's *supposed* to look when it's going to be in use. So, I started putting in background indications, having read the script and heard discussions, and I started to get the visual feel Ridley was after.

He liked some of those visualizations, so he said to me, "Why don't you see what you can do with the street sets?" And, at that time, they decided to use the Burbank Studios to avoid the cost of flying actors and props around the country. So, we redressed its New York set. I took photos of the street and just did a tempera sketch to show how I would dress those sets to match the film's look. That progressed into interior sets, specifically Sebastian's laboratory, Deckard's apartment kitchen and bathroom. In each of those, there was a *specific* picture quality that Ridley determined and outlined.



Mead approached *Blade Runner* as a classical industrial design exercise.

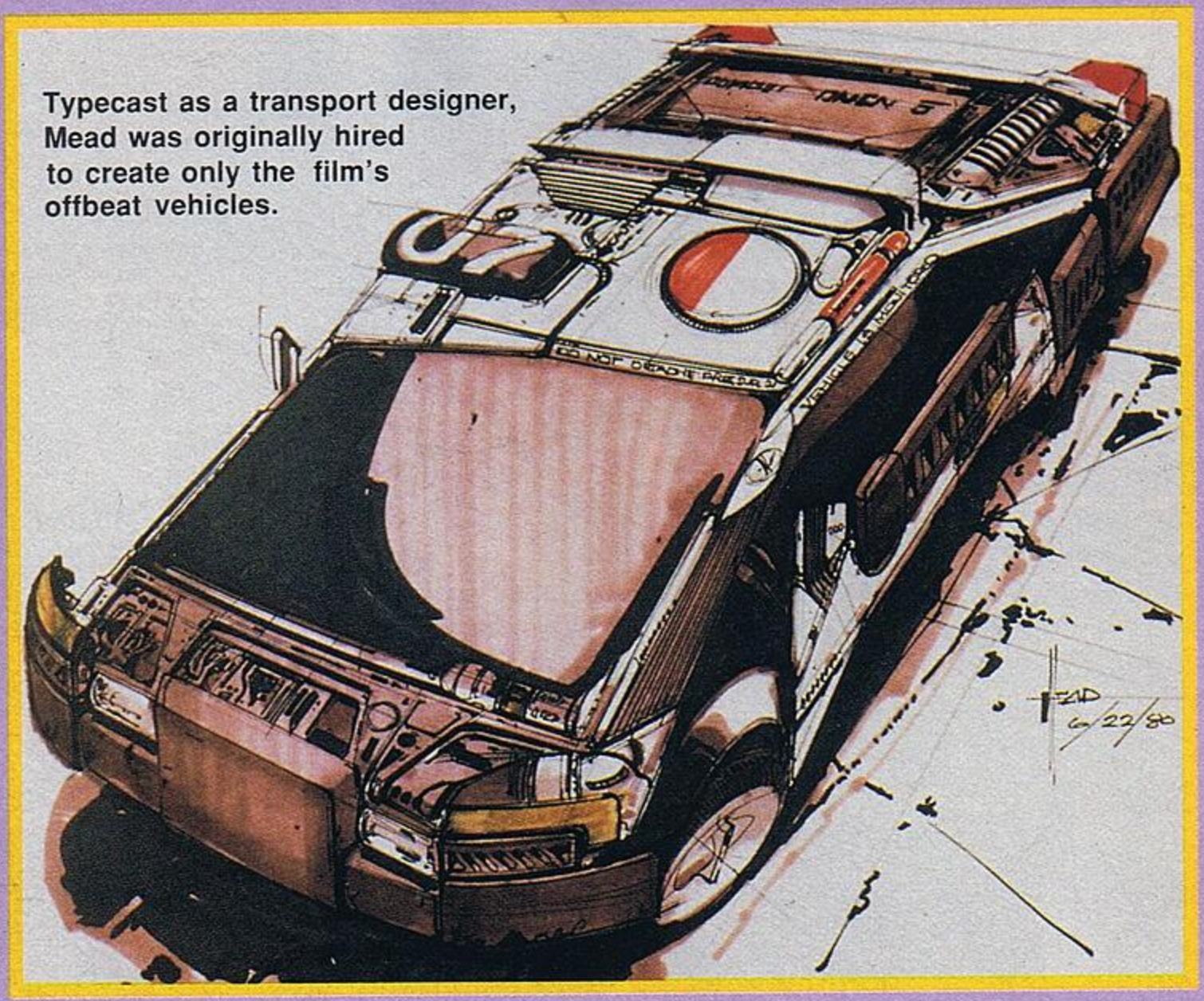
STARLOG: How did you approach the design problems involved?

MEAD: My background in industrial design helped in several instances; one, for example, was the entry system for Deckard's apartment building. We needed a dramatic device or sequence by which you had to get into this high-security building. The current state of the art is a magnetic card. That's *not* very dramatic or future-looking. So, we refined it a bit. You push the card into a slot and the computer in the building identifies you and lets you enter that particular door. My knowledge of these kinds of technological accomplishments allowed me to fine-tune it with screens, voice identification, etc. The device acquires an image which makes the audience: One, appreciate the technology; and two, enhance the dramatic needs of that particular scene.

STARLOG: Why is the *Blade Runner* decor all old and dingy?

MEAD: We set up a sociological sort of theory of why the world would be that way in interpreting the original story, and then the script.

The theory was, that the heavy industry or high technology was concentrating so much on off-world accomplishments that it was taking all of the available capital, maybe as much as 70 percent of it, to accomplish what they were doing in space. As a result, the consumer base wasn't being serviced properly. You didn't have a new toaster, car or shaver, a new device available for shelf sale every year as we do now. That then produced the recycling of old things, or redressing them to make them work better or longer, which meant that you had an after-market to supply bits and pieces of stuff, parts, technological add-on blocks, and you just put these on the car or refrigerator to make them work better because there's no new model.



Typecast as a transport designer, Mead was originally hired to create only the film's offbeat vehicles.

This approach produced an accumulative sort of lumpy, knobby look, because everything was "retrofitted" with bits and pieces to make it work.

STARLOG: Whose concept was this?

MEAD: Ridley would, in detail, describe what he was thinking about and what he wanted it to look like. He's very visual himself because he's an artist. He would draw sketches.

One striking example is the Voight-Kampf polygraph. He specifically said to me: "I want it to be very delicate but look very menacing, sort of like a tarantula sitting on your desk." It had to be small enough to be a briefcase device. It had a thick cable underneath the desk going to a remote control box, but in essence, it was a very delicate device which sort of unfolded by itself. It had an optical thing that followed you and was centered on your face, because the idea was that it watched your iris opening. When you get very nervous, your iris contracts, and it showed this on a small TV screen. The person operating the device would watch the iris' opening and closing, which is analyzed by a computer. Plus the fact that Ridley wanted it to look "alive." So, we had a bellows built into it.

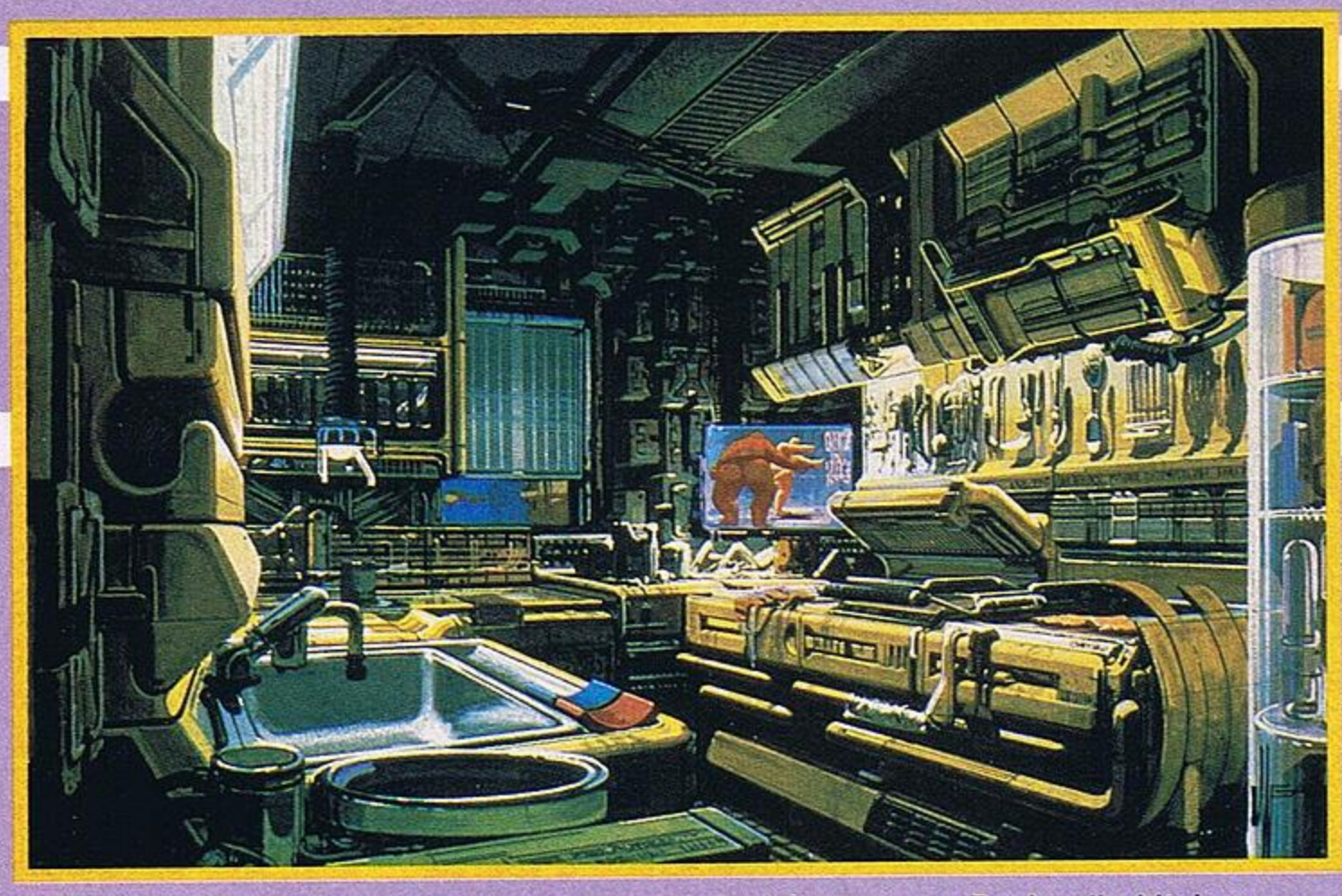
The idea was that there *is* a science of smell. They suspect that there are molecules called pheromones that come off a person, and your nose picks these up. So, this machine would literally "breathe" with its bellows, very slightly, drawing in air samples and analyzing them along with the iris contractions. That's a specific cross-over between Ridley's visually exact direction and coming up with a workable prop.

STARLOG: How did you interface with production designer Lawrence Paull?

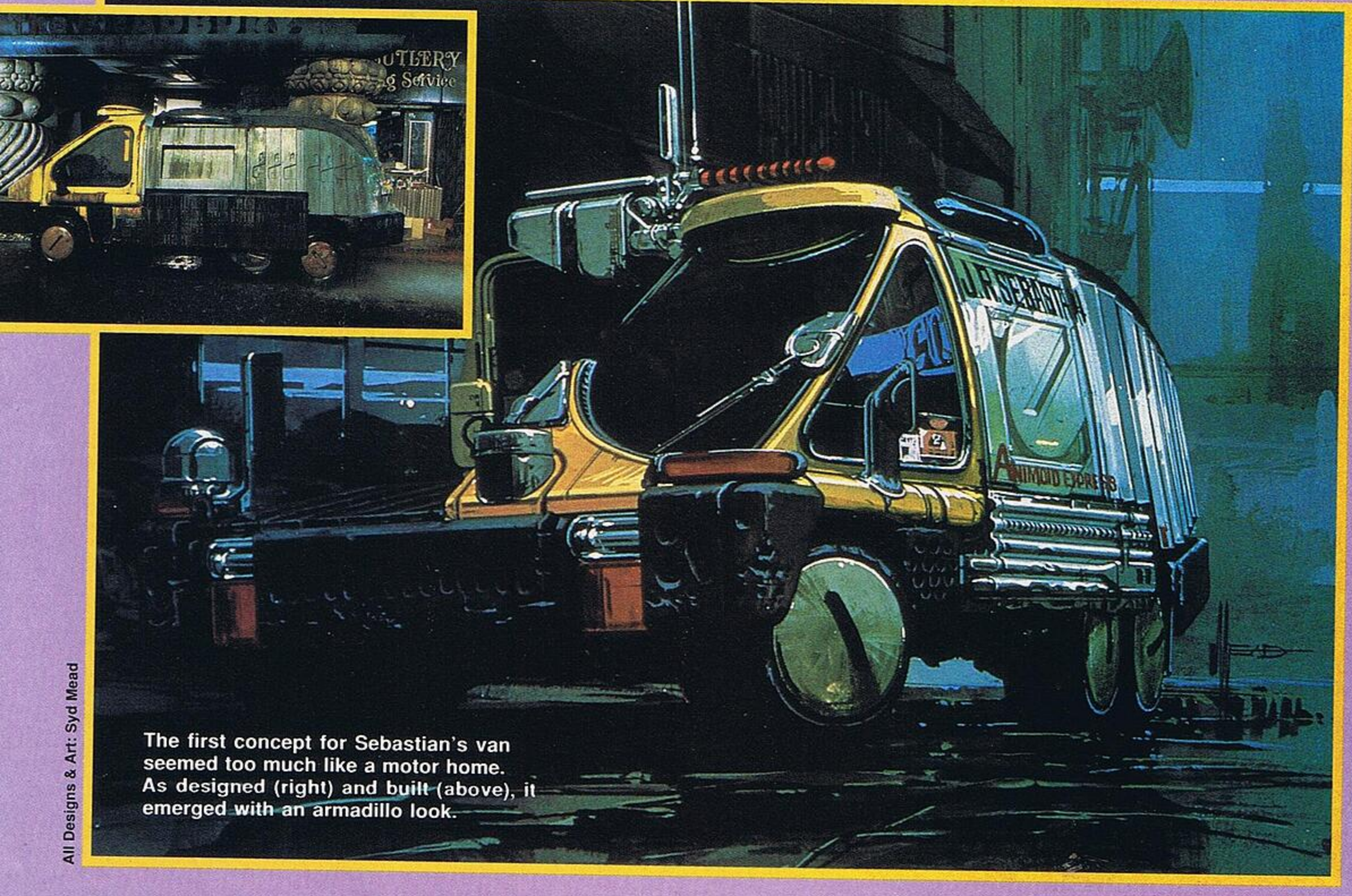
MEAD: Larry's job was to have the things built—everything, the vehicles, the sets—and have them built to something resembling a budget, and putting up with the changes in scenes! Some scenes were built or were in progress, then were written out of the picture!

I'll give you an example: I went to Europe, and at the time I was designing a beautiful Chinese tea machine for this restaurant where Deckard eats. When I came back with the sheaf of sketches, the scene had been totally written out! I think my designs ended up as a food cart on the street.

Larry's job was also to make the sets actually buildable. What I did was to



Eventually, Mead contributed ideas to such interior sets as Deckard's kitchen, fine-tuning its visual look.



The first concept for Sebastian's van seemed too much like a motor home. As designed (right) and built (above), it emerged with an armadillo look.

All Designs & Art: Syd Mead

supply some visualizations of the specific things needed to make the film look the way it does.

STARLOG: Did you design things that *couldn't* be built?

MEAD: All the time! Larry did an amazing job because he had to have things constructed that were going to be very expensive. Of course, some things were just written out because of cost factors. There was a train scene, for example, that was in the original script. Deckard was on the train going towards the City that was at the time called San Angeles. That was written out, because to rent an actual train or find an old one and redress it for a minute-long scene just wasn't worth it!

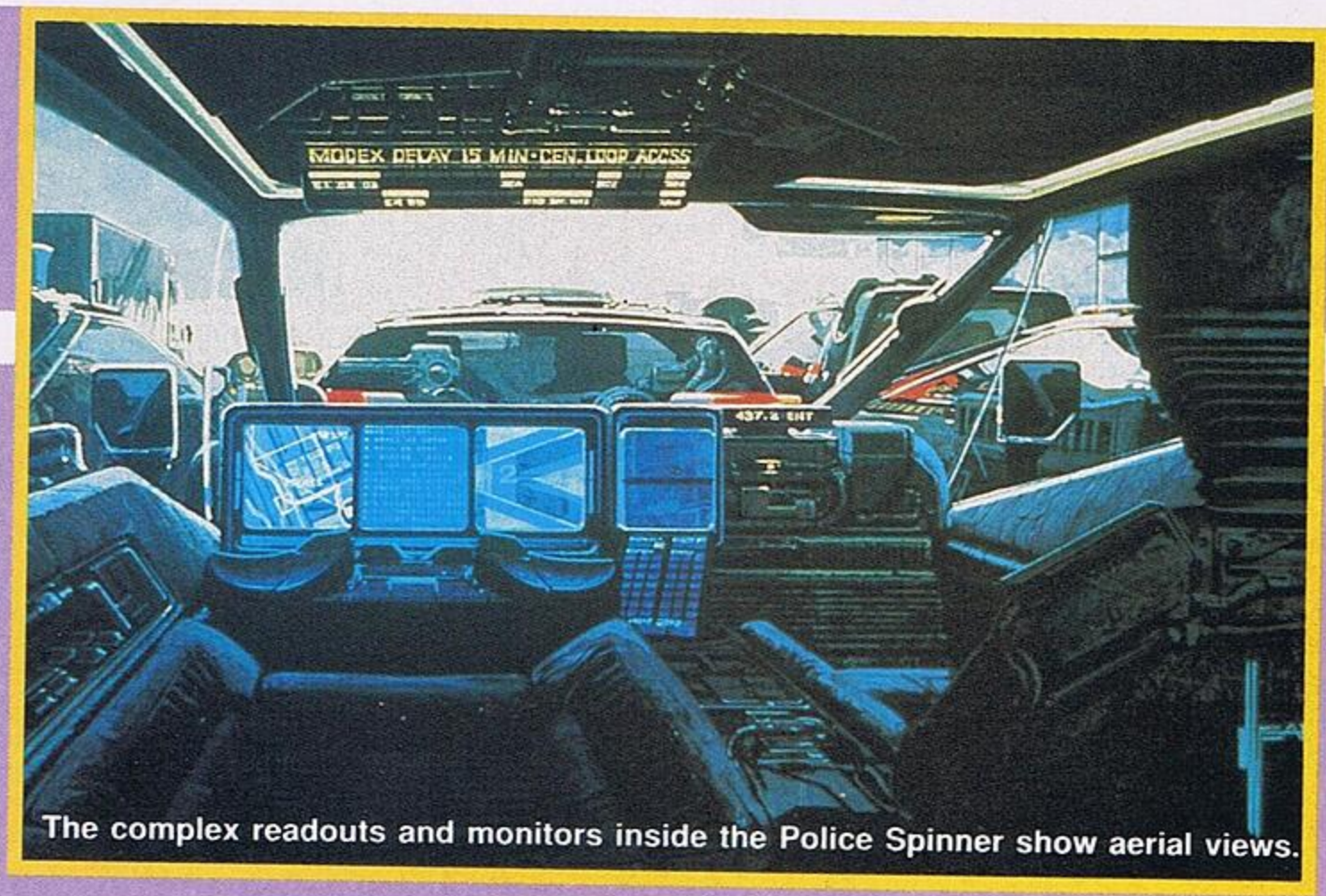
Another example: Originally, the film's ambience was going to be cold, but they found out what the cost was going to be to ship all the sets to Michigan or Wisconsin to get them to freeze. So, instead, it became misty, hot, with sweltering rains.

STARLOG: Why do the streets look so crowded and poor?

MEAD: That look evolved progressively. One of the backgrounds of the vehicle sketches—I think it was the taxi—was reflecting the sociological theories we were discussing at the time. The City had grown to where buildings were 3,000 feet high. I made a scale drawing showing the World Trade Center Towers—they're about 1,200 feet—then upped it to 2,000 feet, and then added another 1,000 feet because we're in Year 2020. When you start to get this scale, you realize that the street level would really serve as access to the building maintenance system. If you had to live next to the street, you would see nothing outside your windows, except machinery and stuff. So, I thought, "We'll have a rental service where you can rent a view!" which means a box that you snap over your window. You have a flat-screen TV—which is technologically feasible right now—then you can have a nice jungle with birds flying by.

Of course, when everyone has one of these, it produces a warehouse-like look to old apartment buildings. It has a non-inhabited look.

Then, you would have big power conduits going up the outside of these old buildings. There would be no use tearing them down. You may take the whole inside out and remodel the entire interior.



The complex readouts and monitors inside the Police Spinner show aerial views.

STARLOG: Isn't doing so much research a bit extravagant for a film?

MEAD: No, it's just professional. The amount of detail you can achieve depends on the money. With enough time and money, you could duplicate the Taj Mahal. In the old cathedrals, the backs of stone figures that you can't see were carved as well because whoever did them attached their own mentality to what they were creating. I think the density of detail is very important.

STARLOG: Yes, but does it make any difference to the spectator?

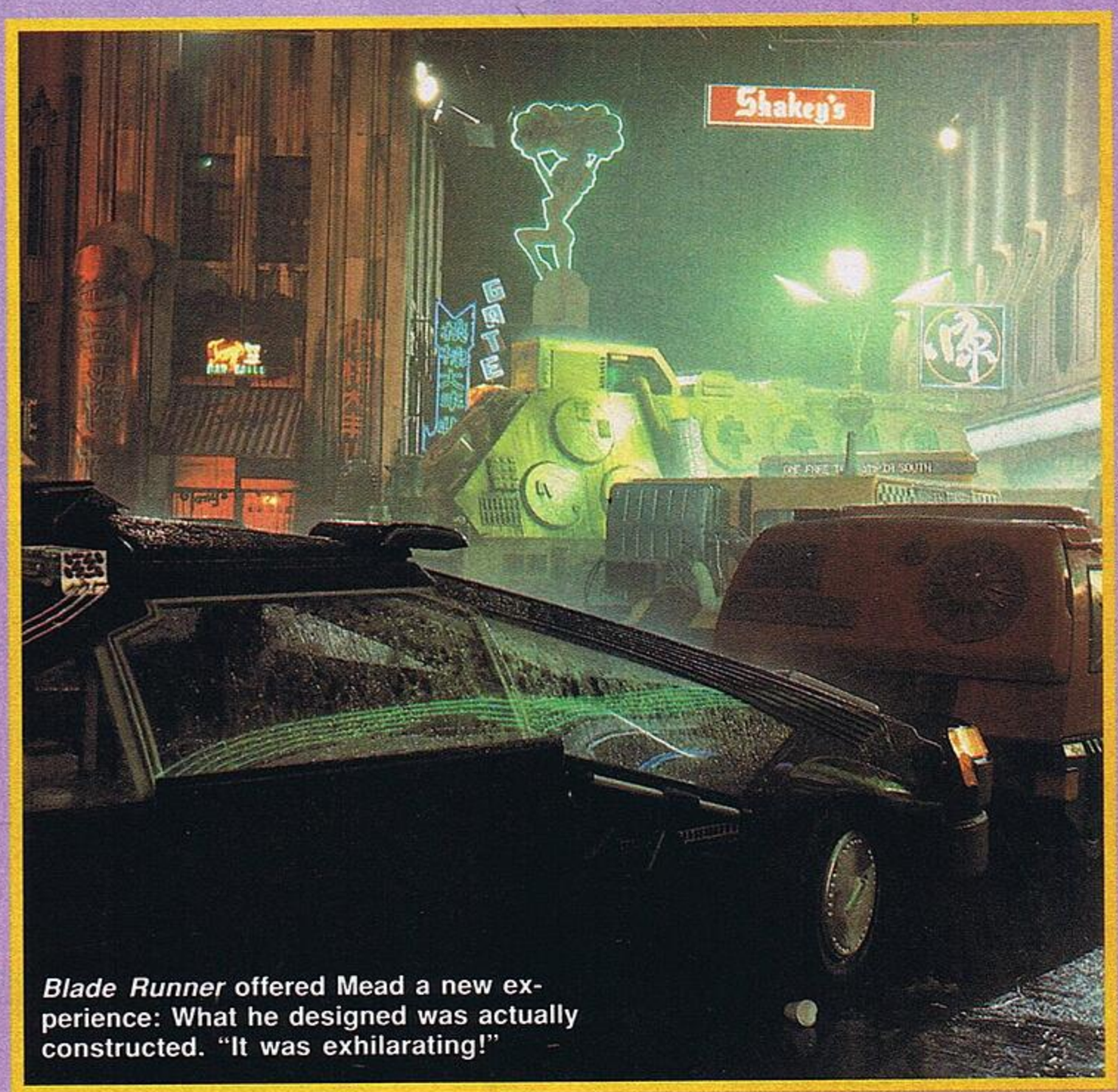
MEAD: I think it does. It becomes *more* believable. If you look at a matte shot and see traffic lights blinking, and you see a car fly by or a little rustle of paper down there, it might cost thousands of dollars for that one little movement, but it makes the entire thing more believable. Incidental movement and details enhance the reality, which is what you're really trying to do.

STARLOG: How much of your designs are based on valid scientific concepts?

MEAD: That depends. In doing Deckard's kitchen, we had to have things that looked like kitchen items. So, if you have a flat surface, maybe that's a griddle. We had this fat sort of rolled-edge thing laying on it, and you don't know what that does—and I don't either! [*Laughs.*] But it looks like something which belongs there. Like, you buy ready-made hamburgers, and they're stored in there, freeze-dried. All of these things aren't scientific, but produce a look, and you can fine-tune that visual look any way you want.

STARLOG: What about the Spinners?

MEAD: Ah, the principle of that is scientific; it's the aerodyne which is an enclosed lift system. It's a valid principle, through which you just direct the exhaust downward. If you equal the vehicle's weight, it lifts off the ground.



Blade Runner offered Mead a new experience: What he designed was actually constructed. "It was exhilarating!"

All Blade Runner Art & Photos: Copyright 1982 The Ladd Company

When Ridley and I had our first meeting, he said, "We have a flying car; that will be your biggest problem." He didn't want rotating blades or fold-out wings. He wanted a real car that would just lift off the ground and fly without changing shape. That way, it would always be recognizable. It made more sense technologically to have something that could land and take off in its own space.

STARLOG: Designs that didn't work?

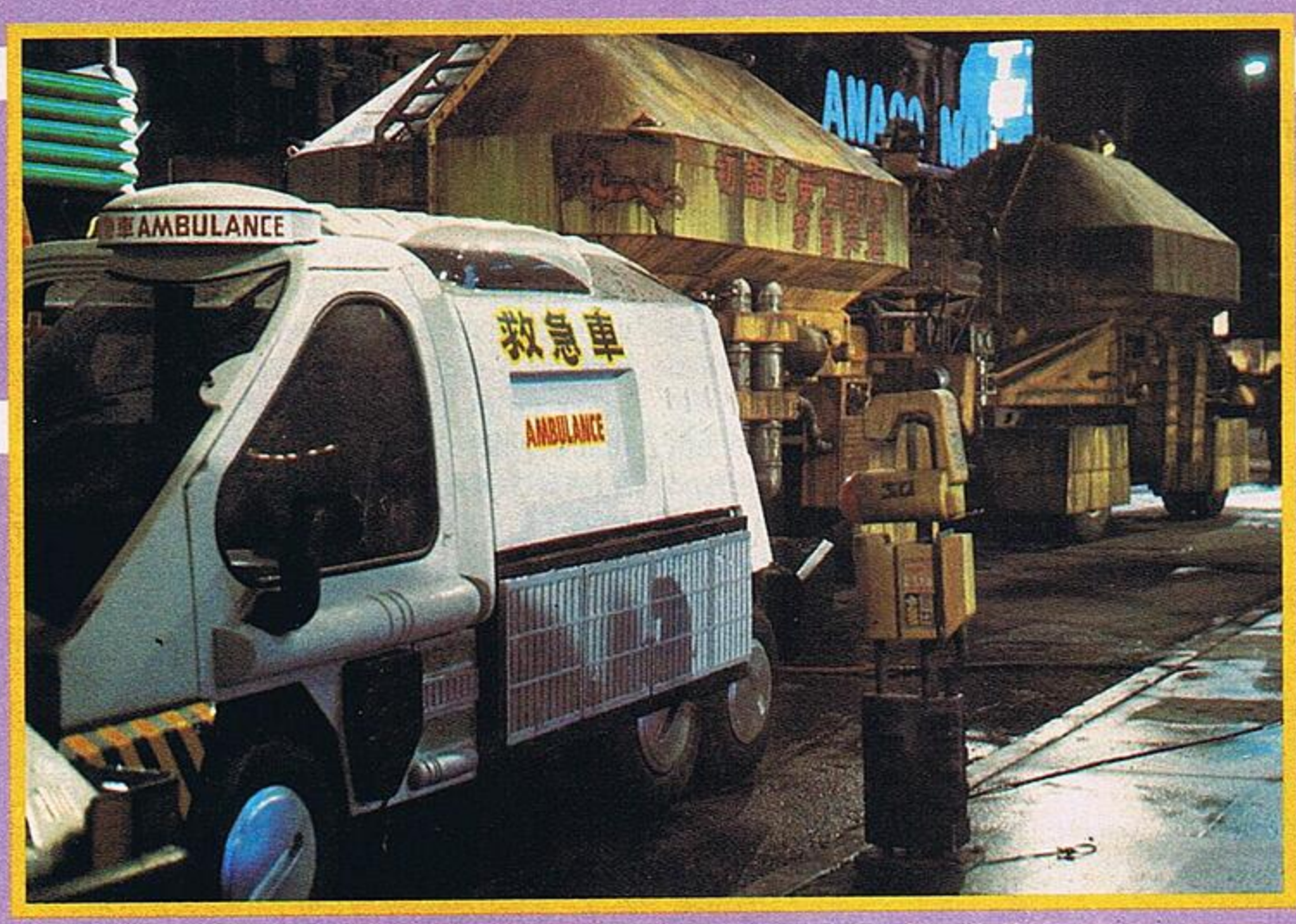
MEAD: Interestingly, yes. We had to design a special gun for Deckard. Ridley didn't want lasers, because that has been overdone. So, we came up with a kind of projectile which maybe had its own propellant built into it. They went shopping around and found a kind of flare gun, a big, heavy kind, and put some things on it to make it fancier. We tried various colored flashes out of the muzzle, but my own original design for the gun wasn't used. In fact, it became a telephone, because when the sketch was lying upside down, it looked like a futuristic headset telephone! [*Laughs*]

STARLOG: Any ideas totally changed?

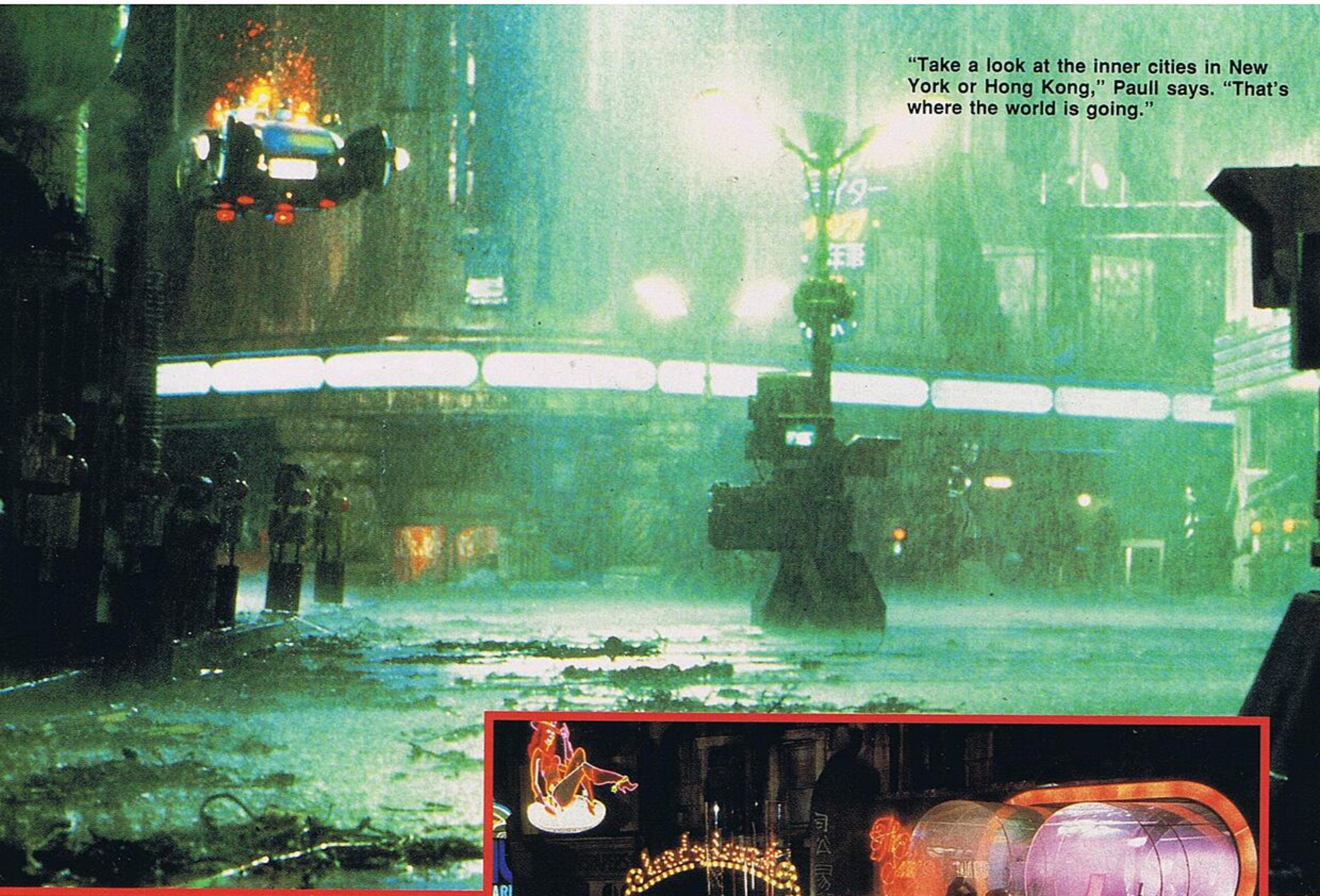
MEAD: Yes, Sebastian's truck. We had to come up with a truck that Sebastian, who was a tinkerer, might have built from things he found. The problem is what you would find in a junkyard 40 years from now. I started off with a streamlined version of an old ambulance he might have bought, but it looked too much like a motor home. Then, we went into a completely new direction and assumed he might have gotten hold of an off-center cab chassis. So, we built a cabin on its back, and incorporated all sorts of technological scraps, and it grew just like it would have grown had he done it as we supposed.

STARLOG: How was it to see your designs actually built?

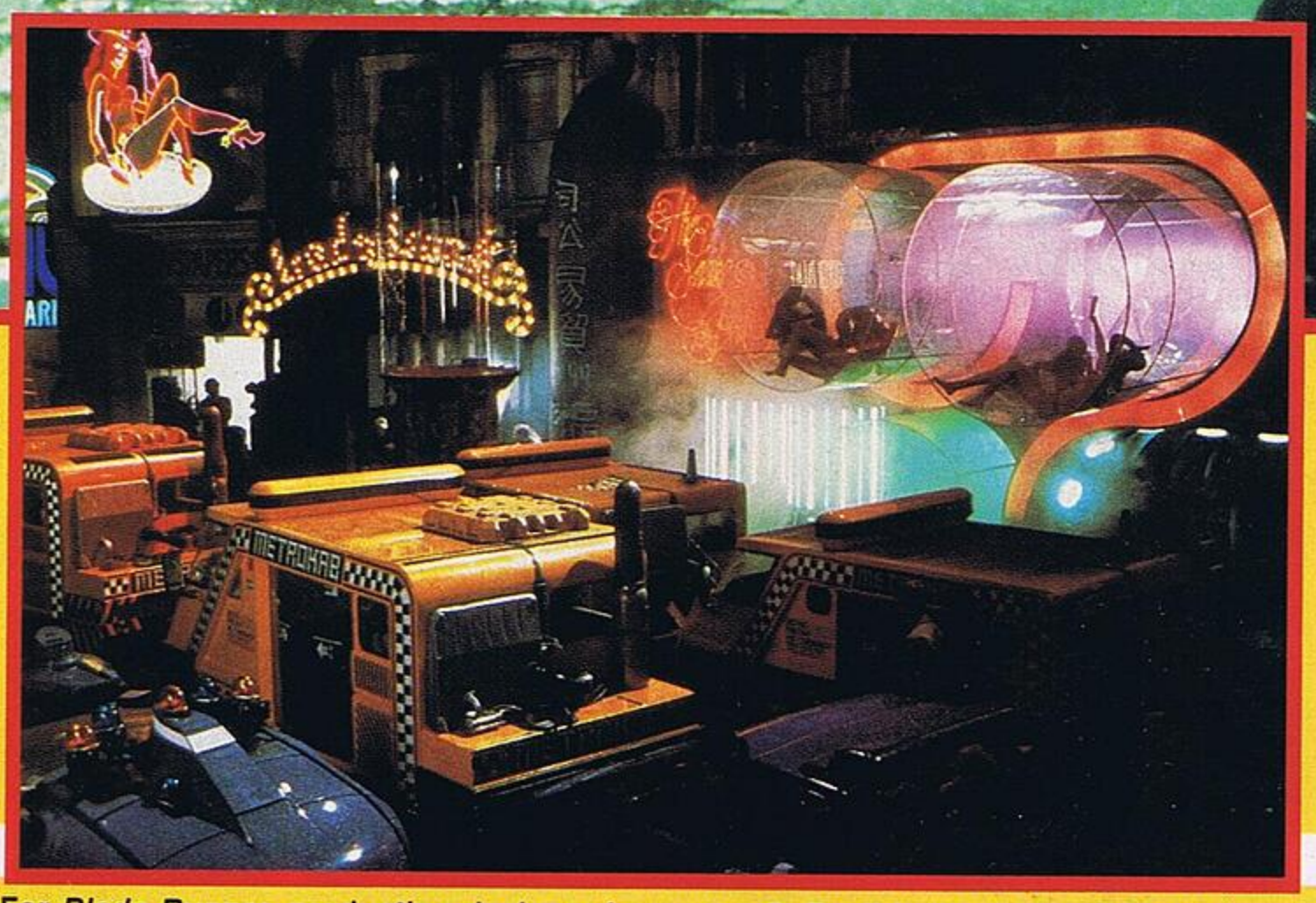
MEAD: It was exhilarating! Most of the things I design are *never* built, because I work in a theoretical kind of area. But having something actually fabricated is fantastic because it does prove to me that my research, my ideas, were correct. ★



Mead's design for Sebastian's van was modified into the futuristic ambulance.



"Take a look at the inner cities in New York or Hong Kong," Paull says. "That's where the world is going."



For *Blade Runner*, production designer Lawrence G. Paull built what a city might look like 40 years from now.

The mean streets of Blade Runner*'s future boom with life, full of texture and color. Making the film's bold design come alive are production designer Lawrence G. Paull, art director David Snyder and their staffs. Working closely with Ridley Scott and Syd Mead, Paull built an incredible future world, its street set dubbed "Ridleyville."*

Paull, a production designer whose film and TV credits include How to Beat the High Cost of Living *and* The Last American Hero, *describes* Blade Runner *as one of the most draining and difficult projects on which he has ever worked. For one three-week period, he never left the studios, and had changes of clothes delivered to him. By the shoot's end, he had lost 15 pounds. Still, he relives with enthusiasm his experiences on* Blade Runner.

STARLOG: You haven't done any SF pictures before?

LAWRENCE G. PAULL: No. One of the things I have to be rather clear on is that I *don't* consider *Blade Runner* to be a SF film. I have always considered it a period piece; it's just that the period we're doing is 40 years from now, instead of, say, 1940.

The only other thing close to SF that I've ever gotten involved with was a picture which unfortunately never got made. That was years ago at MGM, something called *Pyramid*, which Doug Trumbull was going to direct. A good percentage of it got designed. We had storyboarded the entire picture, but the studio decided not to do it!

What I try to do for myself is to not be typecast as doing SF films, period pieces or whatever. I try to do a mixture whenever possible, although I happen to love period pieces! My background is architectural, as opposed to Syd Mead's, which is industrial design, so we have a different attitude towards design. What I found interesting in *Blade Runner* was that it was set *only* 40 years in the future, so you're projecting forward as to what a city will look like, what the environment will be, the attitudes of the people. So, you build up a whole thesis really, before you sit down and start designing. It gives you a very concrete approach to the problem, and the results can be good, or bad. Take a look at the inner cities in New York or Hong Kong; that's where the world is going.

STARLOG: How did you get involved?

PAULL: I was called in for an interview. Ridley and I were able to communicate; he felt he could work with me.

STARLOG: Did you have any input in the background designs?

PAULL: Yes, absolutely. Syd was involved initially in automobile designs, and what I would call the design of the hardware. When I met Syd, when I first got involved, he had already had preliminary discussions with Ridley for the vehicles' look and style. As time went on,

the vehicles evolved. It didn't just happen magically. What happened was that when Syd was doing some illustrations for some of the vehicles, he put in some of the city, pieces of buildings. Ridley and I liked what was happening, so we took Syd out to where we were going to create the City. We sat down and did a lot of brainstorming.

Syd is an incredible illustrator, and he came back with many interesting things that were drawn up. It was a combination of what I had said, Ridley's input and Syd's own ideas.

STARLOG: How did you achieve that retrofitted look?

PAULL: All of the hosing, turbine and blocks of foam were added onto the buildings. The idea is that the building's mechanics have deteriorated, and people go outside to buy additive types of mechanical devices to service them. Consequently, you get a building style where it has just built up layers.

We also tried to make the streets look very claustrophobic. We designed it in such a way that it is, in many areas, similar to Milan, where the buildings actually come out right to the curb and feature covered arcades with columns.

It wasn't going to be all straight modern glass and steel buildings. Somewhere along the line, somebody had said, "Let's get back to a more decorative type of architectural motif." So, there were these massive columns holding up monolithic buildings.

Then, there were all of the interior spaces. Syd was also involved in these, designing the hardware. We collaborated on the decoration of Deckard's apartment. I had done rough designs which I gave him. We also went through various types of research books. We looked through electronic gadgets catalogs—a portable, battery-operated vacuum cleaner was used as a hair-dryer. The purpose was to find things with a hi-tech look and stick them here and there.

Then, there's the rest of the movie. The responsibility for getting Syd's and Ridley's ideas done and designed right was mine. Besides the City, which was one set, there were 20 or 25 interior sets, which we sat down and designed basically from scratch. They were of the future somewhat, but not all. Many times, we also drew from the past.

STARLOG: And that dingy look?

PAULL: We didn't call it that, but all of the streets and the interiors of many of the buildings had a lot of trash. It wasn't just paper trash or garbage trash, it was all like hi-tech trash. We used all sorts of airplane parts, engine parts and just broke them all apart. We had barrels of them—55 gallons of hi-tech trash! The point was that we had to have trash that looked like it was part of the buildings and cars which deteriorated on the spot, and just have it lay there. It also gave us an added texture—it looks a lot different

Paull doesn't consider *Blade Runner* SF, but a period piece set in the future.

than if we had just taken paper and threw it all around.

STARLOG: Did you have any problems assembling any of Mead's designs?

PAULL: The only thing pertaining to Syd that we had a difficult time with was the Voight-Kampf machine. We had a great deal of difficulty making its mechanics work in the size that we wanted to make it. We started over from scratch again a second time, and we finally got it to work.

We also had some difficulties with some of the vehicles because of the time factor involved. What we were asked to do was come up with five different types of vehicles in a five-month span from design to finish. There were a total of 28 or so vehicles. When you think about that in terms of how long it takes General Motors to pull together a custom car—and we were talking about *28* of them in five different styles! They all had to run. They all had to be designed and drawn up for working drawings so that someone had something to go with on them. Our biggest problem was time.

Blade Runner was so encompassing—what we were doing was really creating a *total* environment, from cars to what a city looked like, including parking meters, light standards, mail box chutes, whether you have newspapers or not. In this instance, we took the premise that there would be no newspapers in 40 years. Everything is going to come over video machines. With the time limitations, such a total approach to design takes a great deal out of you.

STARLOG: Was starting with the New York Street set easier than setting up a new set from scratch?

PAULL: I don't think it was a matter of easier or not; it had to be done that way, period! Many of the buildings on the set stayed as they were; the only things we changed was that we would add the retrofitting, transformers, hosing, pipes, all these strange connector devices.

Had we started from scratch, we would have had to build the old buildings first, and then do the retrofitting on top of it. There are several factors to consider: time, the budget, but also, where do you build such a set? You have to find a very large soundstage that you can tie up for months, and that's *very* expensive!

STARLOG: What came first, the street set or the vehicles?

PAULL: The vehicles. Then, we got involved in some of the interior sets. I had put together an entire art department and we laid out a schedule of what our priorities were. I had three fellows working on executing drawings for just the street and another three doing just the sets.

STARLOG: Was the fact that some designs were written out frustrating?

PAULL: It's somewhat frustrating, yes. But what's sad about it is you've wasted all of that money and time.

I remember one specific, very large set that I designed—it was an interior set. It got halfway built and then, one day, someone said we were going to cut it out. Apparently, it was budgetary, and they were concerned about the flow of one scene through to the next. There was a lot of "shoe work" in this movie, people walking from one scene to another, as opposed to just dramatically cutting.

(continued on page 70)

All Blade Runner Art & Photos: Copyright 1982 The Ladd Company

Blade Runner's initial backer was Filmways Pictures, but the studio fell prey to severe financial difficulties. Alan Ladd Jr., with his new production house, The Ladd Company, took over. Oscar-winning producer Michael Deeley worked closely with director Ridley Scott, whom he had brought to the project.

Scott, of course, is noted for The Duellists, Thelma and Louise *and most importantly to genre fans,* ALIEN *and* Legend. *Scott has previously discussed his work in STARLOG #26, #60 & #101.*

Blade Runner *was Scott's first Hollywood feature. According to all who worked on it, it was very much the director's own picture, reflecting his particular vision. In this interview, which took place* before *the film's release, he takes a close look at* Blade Runner.

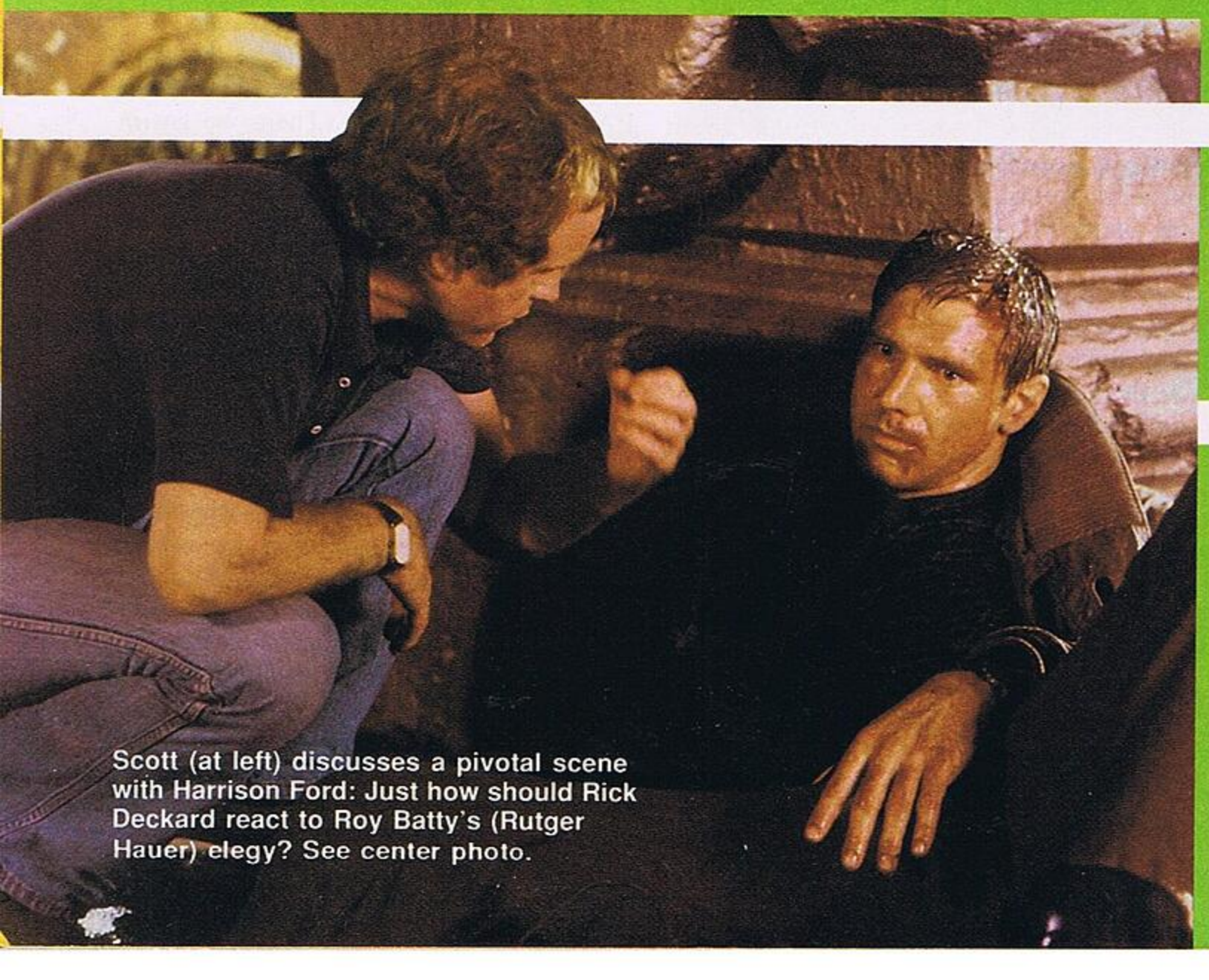
RIDLEY SCOTT: It's a curious film. It runs on two levels. It's almost, in parts, philosophical. I hesitate to use the word with a commercial movie, but nevertheless, it is.

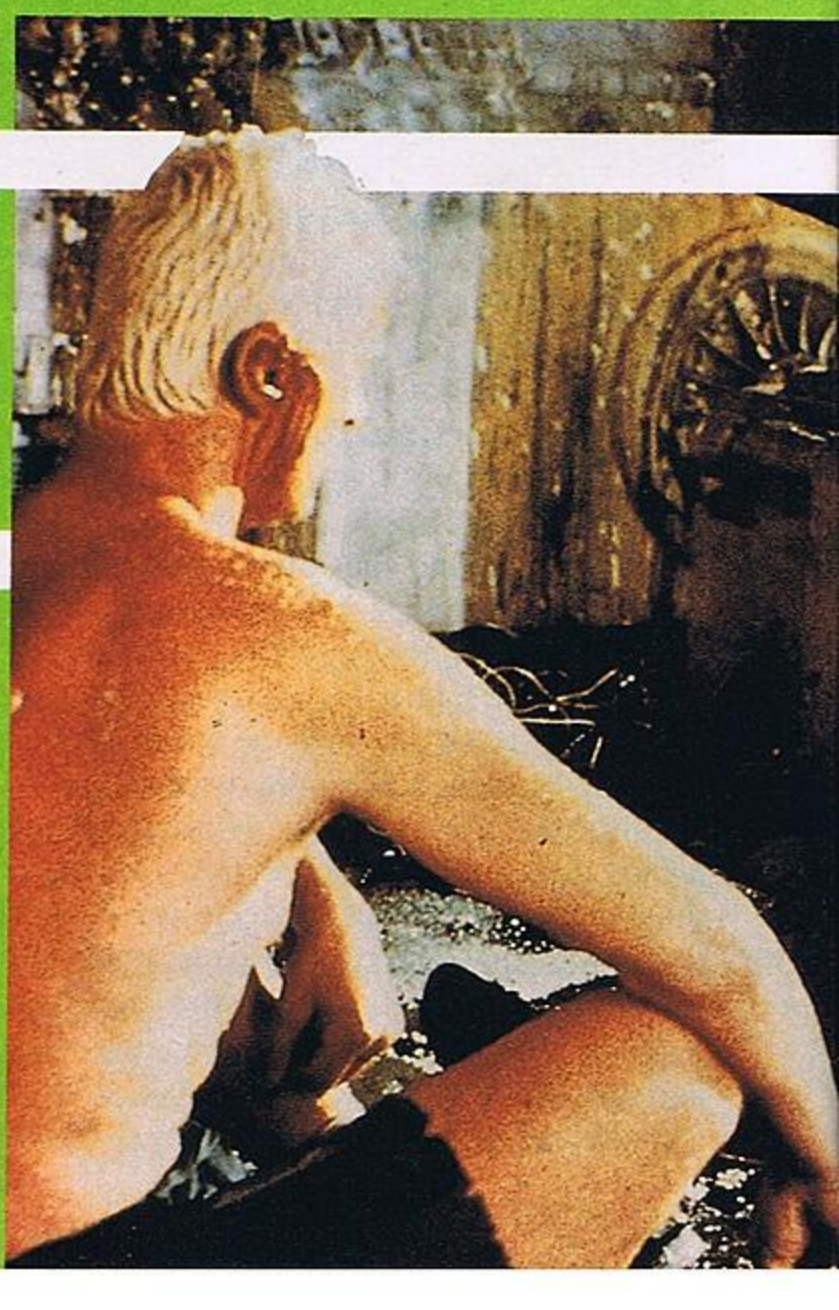
STARLOG: How did you get involved?

SCOTT: Funnily enough, I had been shown it a year-and-a-half before, by Michael Deeley, who developed it. I thought that the screenplay at that stage was very interesting. It was by Hampton Fancher. But the automatic reaction on my part, having read it, was to advise Mike that I thought it was a terrific screenplay, but that I *didn't* want to do it because it touched ground with what I had just done, *ALIEN*. So, Mike automatically catalogued it as science fiction.

I had let it go, but it stuck with me while I was working on something else [a film version of *Dune*]. I kept picking it up and looking at it, and suddenly I decided that I knew a way of doing it which, oddly enough, would have *nothing* to do with what I had just done! Because, in a funny way, it's really like a contemporary movie, about relationships.

STARLOG: Were you already familiar





Scott (at left) discusses a pivotal scene with Harrison Ford: Just how should Rick Deckard react to Roy Batty's (Rutger Hauer) elegy? See center photo.

"In a funny way," says director Ridley Scott, "*Blade Runner* is really a contemporary film." Moviegoers can experience Scott's vision in theaters this fall with the release of the director's cut.

with Philip K. Dick's books?

SCOTT: I must admit that never in my life had I read a Philip K. Dick novel! I knew of him, obviously. I tried one of his novels, and found it extremely complex. Hampton Fancher had actually done a very interesting precis of the book, so it made it much easier for me.

STARLOG: Once you decided to get involved in *Blade Runner*, why did you pick Syd Mead to design?

SCOTT: I was a designer, and I still come very strongly from that direction with all the projects I do. It so happens that it helps tremendously with the kind of material and subjects that attract me.

I had been aware of Syd's work for two or three years. I had picked up his book *Sentinel* about two years beforehand. I thought it was very curious, very brilliant illustrations. You've got to look closely at the corners of those things as well, because there are some marvelous details in what's basically hardware. So when it came to this project, Syd just sprang to my mind.

He was an industrial designer, and I was certain that he would love to speculate on the way that industrial design could go, on a rather more practical level than on that sleek level. So, I contacted Syd and he loved the idea.

We started with him designing the vehicles and then, eventually, he, in collaboration with production designer Larry Paull, started to move onto all sorts of other things: The streets, the buildings.

STARLOG: You must have collaborated a great deal to define the City's look.

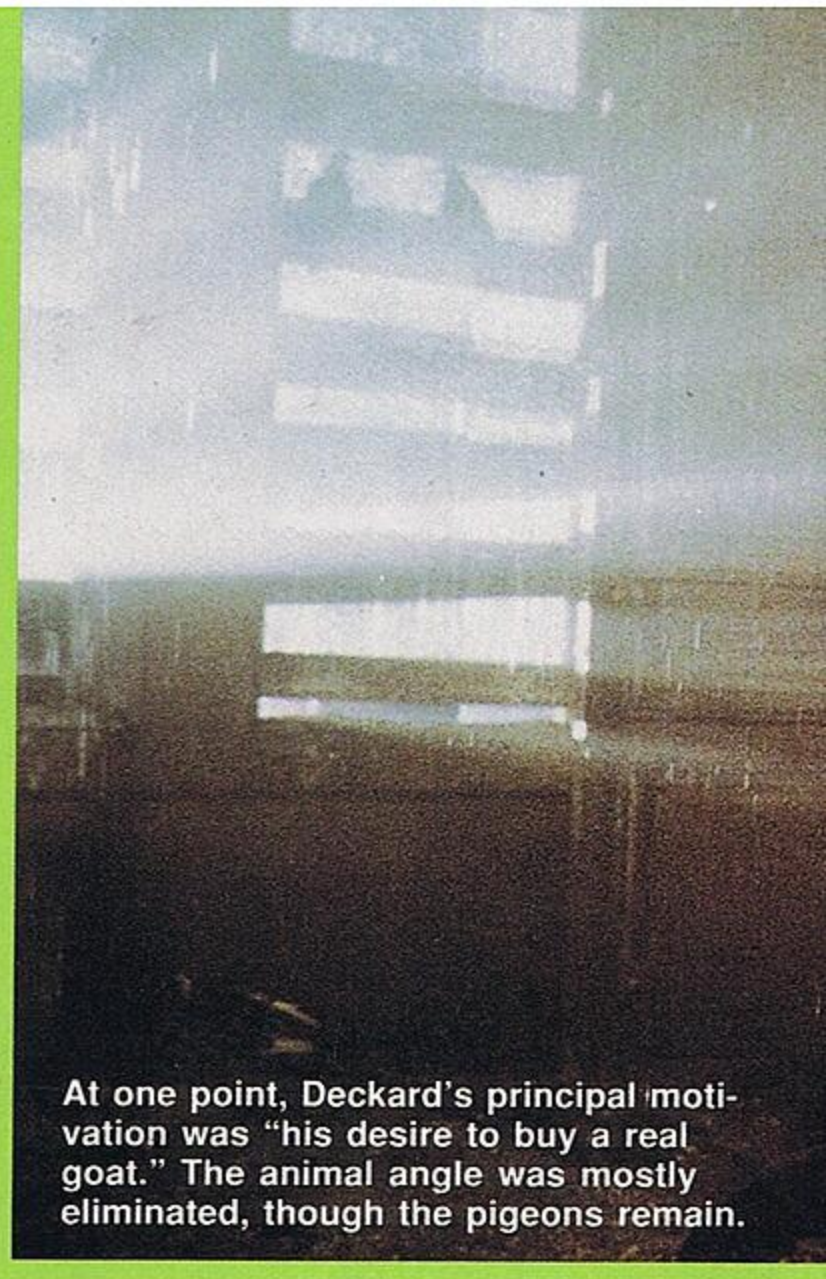
SCOTT: Yes. It's a kind of verbal sculpting process over a period of time. I usually collect a huge number of photographs and references as a part of my preparation of a movie, [resulting in] a pasteboard filled with images of what could serve as references. Then, when the production designer comes in, I usually talk endlessly with him about the way I think it could go. They get sucked in and start to contribute.

It's pretty well the same with every-

The motto of the Tyrell Corporation is "More human than human."

Scott's original idea for introducing the Spinner involved a massive traffic jam. It was jettisoned for budgetary reasons.

All Blade Runner Art & Photos: Copyright 1982 The Ladd Company



At one point, Deckard's principal motivation was "his desire to buy a real goat." The animal angle was mostly eliminated, though the pigeons remain.

one that I deal with in that area. I do have a lot to say about what I want it to look like, but at a certain point, I step back and, hopefully, I've chosen the right people and they get on with it.

STARLOG: In this instance, did you have any difficulties in getting the visualization of your ideas through?

SCOTT: No, because one of the most valuable things I think I ever learned from my schooling is that I can draw very well. I was an art student for seven years, so I should be able to!

I can draw storyboards, sketches. The entire communications process is done not as a verbal communication, but rather as a *pictorial* communication!

STARLOG: How much of the "Spinner" concept was yours, for example?

SCOTT: I originally thought the whole reason for me for doing this film, apart from thinking that the script was interesting, was that, again, in a funny kind of way like *ALIEN*, I could latch onto my own views of how I wanted to do it, how I could shape its look.

So, that look I wanted entailed a lot of air traffic within the City. I had envisaged traffic jams in the air, which I never really got because it would have been too expensive. But originally, we had two really marvelous opening sequences where you witnessed the most immense traffic jam at highway level. Then, Deckard gets out of his car, because he's stuck, the police have called him to come in and he can't. He taps on a digital device inside the car—a kind of lock-in device—and the car moves off on its own. Then, Deckard carefully nips his way through the traffic, which is still moving very slowly, like one mile an hour in a torrential rain, and he goes over the edge of the highway to what is in fact a huge, concrete mushroom. The mushroom reveals itself to be a landing platform. He sits up there, having coffee out of a machine on the wall with other businessmen. They're all waiting to be picked up by air traffic from the lip of the platform. When his turn comes, the Spinner arrives, and that was the introduction of that machine. That was also an expensive sequence.

STARLOG: *Blade Runner* seems to have a lot of rain in it. Why?

SCOTT: If you decide to do a movie the way we did it, where we selected a studio backlot to do the whole picture in, you have to go to every great length to disguise it. Because most backlots you see in films look pretty cruddy. The use of rain on textures that we've created finely puts a layer on it, which pushes it over the edge into reality. It glues it all together, if you like! So, it helps.

The other side of things is that I thought of the idea of having a city with these monolithic buildings. Now, you're looking at buildings which, on average, are the height of the Empire State Building or more. There are buildings which are twice that size. Therefore, it has created its own weather storms at a high level, its own precipitations.

STARLOG: Much of the visual look of the film seems reminiscent of some of the strips done by Moebius for *Heavy Metal*. [Approximately five years after this interview took place, the Lofficiers became Moebius' partners].

SCOTT: I get inspiration from Moebius all the time! I think Moebius is possibly one of the greatest comic strip artists ever! He's absolutely extraordinary. His drawing techniques are wonderful. His ideas, his observations and his humor—humor in every sense, whether it's in the architecture, the clothing, the insolence—are really brilliant.

STARLOG: Did you storyboard the entire picture?

SCOTT: Pretty much. We storyboarded the most important sequences. Then, we had to restoryboard certain sequences, because they proved to be too expensive.

One of the big tricks was how I was going to introduce Deckard in the City. I wanted to do that in a spectacular way because I wanted to really demonstrate what the City was *then*, what our cities could grow to. I didn't want the future to get out of hand, to get so far in advance that there was no point or connection with the present-day audience.

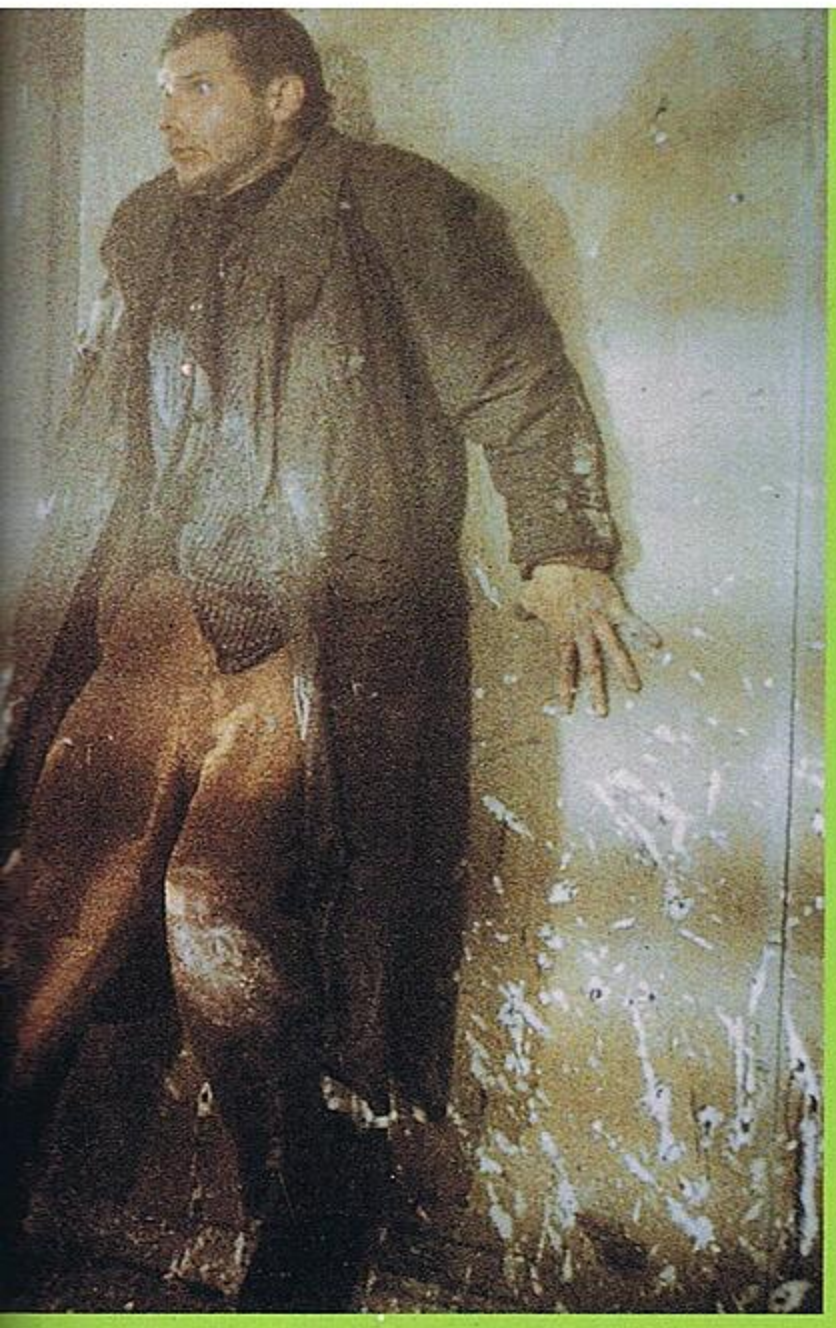
STARLOG: When and why did you call David Peoples to help you with Hampton Fancher's script?

SCOTT: One of my problems with the screenplay early on was that Deckard did no detection! He seemed to be told everything, and I wanted to see some detective work. So, Peoples came in, and started to take over Hampton's place in terms of helping me with those roots, and also with voice-over narrations.

STARLOG: In the screenplay, the world is portrayed as being overcrowded. In Dick's novel, the feeling of alienation arose from the pervasive emptiness. Why this change?

SCOTT: I hate the idea of cities being vastly empty! It's somehow a terrible downer—the idea of city wastelands! I don't mind the idea so much of a multinational, multi-peopled textured city of the future. Somehow, it seems more optimistic! But looking at a terrible wasteland where people are hiding in pigeonholes, and where you see somebody only occasionally on the street or passing in a vehicle—now *that* sounds like a nightmare! I don't think I would have gone with that concept.

STARLOG: How do you reconcile this



Further scenes with Rachael (Sean Young) were written, but not shot. Scott believes expanding the love story would have slowed down the film.

overcrowding with Sebastian's large, empty building?

SCOTT: Well, the building was derelict, right? I believe his comment was something like, "There's no housing shortage *around here*." So, in other words, there *is* a housing shortage, but not in that building. Most of the floors were like the floors that Harrison Ford crawls through, virtually uninhabitable.

STARLOG: The importance of live animals to Deckard, and the world, was an important concept in Dick's novel. It's mostly absent from the film. Why?

SCOTT: That was a very tough concept. We used to have that in the original screenplay, I mean, we had Deckard's desire to buy a real goat be his *principal* motivation. The idea that people will have animals on the roof of their apartment block as a connection with the past—almost as a therapeutic device because these things don't exist anymore—to me, that rang very dangerously close to being pretentious.

It works fine in book form, but when you present it on screen, you must be very careful, because otherwise it looks like one's delivering a lecture, or a message, which, frankly, I think is hokey.

I don't think it *illustrates* OK, in the film sense, I mean. You would have to spend the entire film explaining the presence of these animals, rather than something which is just part of the world we happen to be showing.

STARLOG: Did you feel that having just a few references would be sufficient to get the idea across?

SCOTT: Yes, I think it was. I would like to have done a little more, but I found that the obsession of the central character—the idea of getting a goat—just a little intellectual...and kind of cute, too!

STARLOG: Isn't that inconsistent with showing pigeons in Sebastian's attic?

SCOTT: I could argue that they were all artificial pigeons, but that wouldn't make sense, would it? [*Laughs.*] In this world, there are certain types of animals, city animals, which are still in existence. In London, for instance, there are gigantic flocks of starlings which are destroying the buildings. So, in a city like that, you may start to lose exotic creatures, but the animals that *could* survive, like rats and birds, would. Then, you're looking at pigeons the same way as a rodent. It's a pest.

STARLOG: The film's final scene, showing vast, unspoiled countryside, contrasted strongly with that bleak City.

SCOTT: Sure, it does, but there are huge, beautiful wastelands even today, in Alaska and Labrador, where only a brave soul or two exist. That doesn't mean to say that you or I are going to want to go up there and live there, or whether it's even practical to go and live up there!

These wastelands will always exist. Pushing city limits out to areas like that would probably be impossible.

There was a big argument about this. I would have liked to have stuck rigidly to the idea that Earth was then pretty well decimated and exhausted, and therefore, what you're looking at was a fairly bleak prospect, but these two characters were going to survive anyway, somehow. That's the romantic notion of the whole thing, because Deckard is essentially a survivor. But after the whole film, which I guess is fairly intense, to end up seeing them having escaped into an impossibly uncomfortable landscape would have been a *real* downer. I just didn't want to end on such a down note. So, it seemed to make sense to end on the idea that there would be some unspoiled areas in the world still left.

STARLOG: Didn't you worry that Harrison Ford was too linked in the minds of the public to *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*?

SCOTT: Nobody had seen *Raiders* at that point. I caught Harrison way before *Raiders*. I wasn't concerned about anything; he was dead right for the role.

STARLOG: Roy Batty is a far more compelling, charismatic character. Was that intentional?

SCOTT: Well, I think that Deckard's character is very austere. Roy Batty,

(continued on page 69)

"We were beginning to reflect what was happening in reality," says Anderson of *Fireball XL5*

DANCE OF THE SUPERMARIONETTES

Sylvia Anderson helped usher in an era of SF puppet people.

By STAN NICHOLLS

Lady Penelope of *Thunderbirds* was "the counter-balance to the other characters" on the show, says Sylvia Anderson.
STINGRAY
XL5

After a trip to the States, the Andersons demanded that "the next series *must* be in color." That series was *Stingray*.

Thunderbirds, the '60s SF puppet show, is undergoing a massive revival in England following BBC Television's decision to rerun the series in prime time. This move has opened the floodgates to a torrent of spin-offs and merchandising.

It's a perfect time, then, for Sylvia Anderson, "the voice of Lady Penelope," to publish her autobiography, *Yes, M'Lady*, which tells the story of *Thunderbirds*, the 12 other series and three films she produced with ex-husband Gerry, a former STARLOG columnist.

The book was written, she explains, in response to requests from fans that started even before *Thunderbirds*' original run had ended. "I had a lot of feedback from people saying, 'We heard about Gerry we know you were a team. Have you thought of writing *your* story?'

"On the subject of fans, I think they're very, very important, but it can get to a point where maybe they're fanatical over the wrong things, if you know what I mean.

"For example, when we were doing *Fireball XL5*, I used to get letters from a girl in Texas who said her name was Venus, which was the name of a character in the series. The letters became hysterical and it really got out of hand. So, it's a slightly dangerous area. However, that's not to detract from the real fans, whom one is obviously so grateful for.

"Another reason I wrote the book was because I felt the people who worked with us, the team that made it all possible, hadn't been given due credit," she continues. "The success of *Thunderbirds* and the other shows was *not* one person's story. It wasn't even *two* people's story; it was the story of a whole crew of very dedicated, hard-working people."

Sylvia Anderson's first job in the film industry was with the small production company Polytechnic, for whom future husband Gerry was a director. It was via Polytechnic that they made their first puppet shows for children: *Twizzle*, *Torchy* and *Four Feather Falls*. But they got into the field by accident.

"We didn't set out to make puppet films," she confirms, "and we didn't set out to form a company in order to make children's material. We formed a company to make movies. We took on *Twizzle* and *Torchy* only because they were offered to us. We needed to work to survive, and we got them because we gave the lowest quote [bid to produce the show]. Having done those series, we said, 'Wait a minute; maybe there's a market out there.' So, we went it alone and did our own show, *Four Feather Falls*."

Given that the Andersons originally wanted to make live-action projects, was there a sense in which they treated the puppets as though they were actors? "I think we did," Sylvia notes. "We made every effort to disguise the fact they were puppets by evolving very, very thin wires that only occasionally glinted and showed up on film. We tried to give the puppets a less-puppety look, although we never quite conquered the walk, which was always rather jerky and puppet-like. Our approach was definitely that these were *not* 22-inch characters. Everyone took it very seriously.

"We always worked on the scripts together, Gerry and me. We created the characters and the theme, and in the early days, wrote quite a few episodes ourselves. As we got busier, we had a team of writers in to follow through from the 'bible' we had created."

No Colors

The early series were made on shoestring budgets. "Filming that way gives you a great discipline, and to this day, I'm very aware of being somewhere on time and doing something professionally. I really don't have much time for people who behave unprofessionally.

"One of the things that has happened in the years since *Thunderbirds* is that it has gotten rather tainted by whining on a personal level. With Gerry, I mean. I object to that. I think it should be kept professional. We're no longer husband and wife, but we *were* professional partners, and I would like to keep that going. Over the years, only one name has

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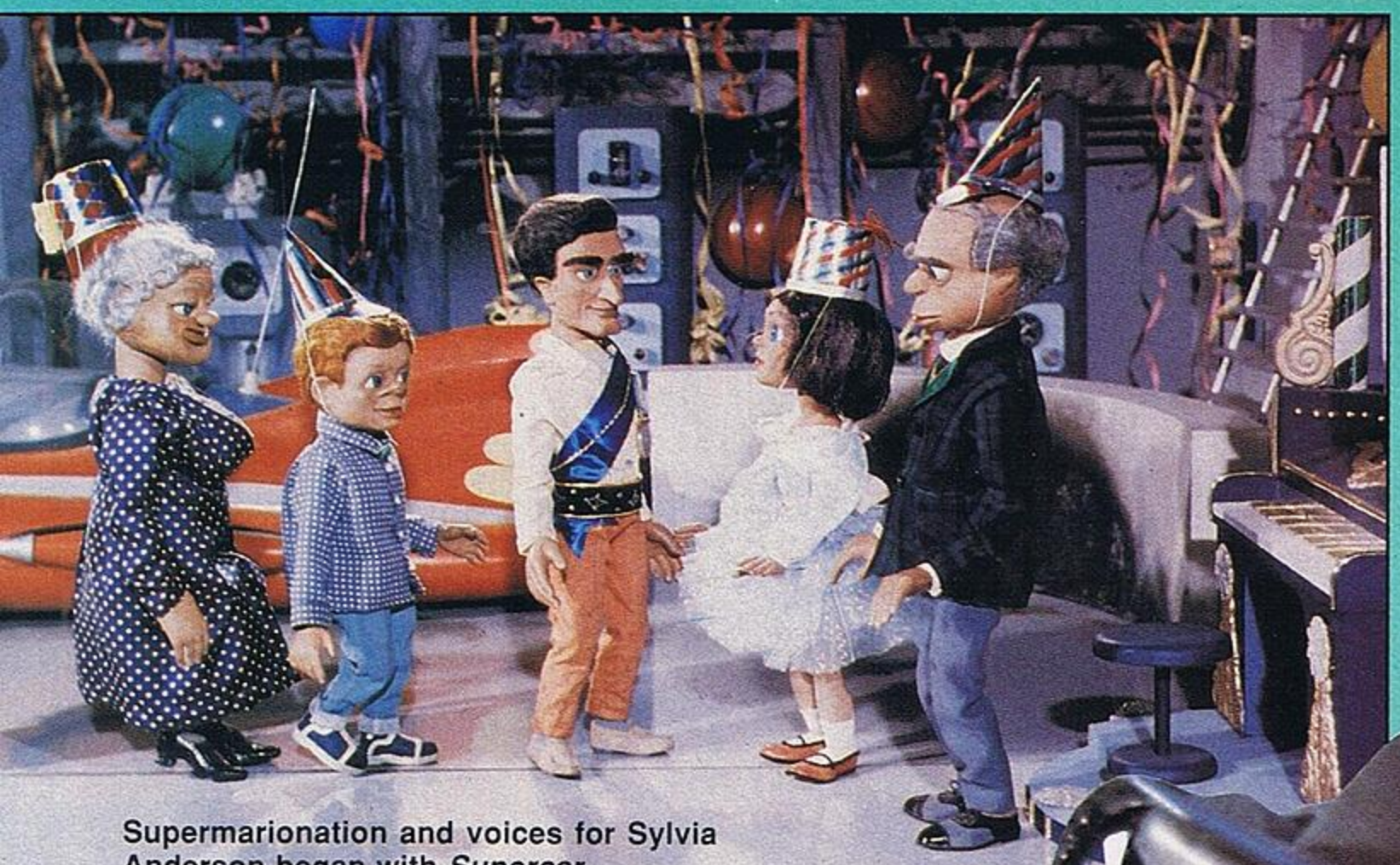
STAN NICHOLLS, veteran British correspondent, profiled Robert Asprin in STARLOG #182.

Stingray, Supercar, Fireball XL5 Photos: ITC



Supermarionation and voices for Sylvia Anderson began with *Supercar*.

been associated with those shows—Gerry's. So, hopefully that has been put right by my writing the book."

Their careers really took off when they were introduced to Lew Grade, now Lord Grade, who was then building a reputation as one of British TV's most powerful moguls. "That introduction proved to be the most important of our working lives. He was just beginning on the TV side, and was at the height of his career as an impresario. Lew was a big thinker who recognized talent and backed it."

The first thing Grade backed for them was *Supercar*, essentially an adolescent male fantasy centered around a vehicle that could travel on the ground, underwater and through the air. "That was very much a little boy's dream," Anderson observes. "It evolved from Reg Hill, one of our directors, and Gerry. I did an outline before we filmed *Supercar*, and we showed it to Lew when he said, 'What do you want to do next?' We had only thought of doing *Four Feather Falls* next, because we assumed Granada [the TV network] would ask for another series, but they didn't."

It was with *Supercar* that Sylvia Anderson began to do character voices—playing hero Mike Mercury's young helper Jimmy. The series was also the first filmed in the "Supermarionation" process. "Supermarionation embraced all the new techniques we were evolving," she says. "If you compare *Twizzle* to *Supercar*, you can see there's a quantum leap in technique. We called it Supermarionation to really get away from the awful word 'puppet'—which at that time meant strings like ropes and terribly jerky movements."

Fireball XL5 refined the techniques. The popular show was inspired by the public's growing interest in the then-embryonic American space program. "Astronauts were definitely becoming heroes. With our characters Steve Zodiac and Venus, we were beginning to reflect what was happening in reality.

"In fact, [national newspaper] *The Daily Sketch* reproduced some of Derek Meddings' designs, and they were very close to the vehicles actually later used in the space program. What Derek used to do was take something that could possibly exist and project it into the future." Special FX supervisor Meddings worked with the Andersons from their earliest series, emerging as a leading SFX expert, with credits eventually including five James Bond films, the first three *Superman* movies and *Batman*.

As the Andersons' reputation, and budgets, grew, they became more ambitious. Their next project, *Stingray*, was British TV's first color production. "Gerry and I had been to the States—we used to go there regularly as sort of Lew Grade's ambassadors—and we saw color TV for the first time. We came back and said, 'The next series *must* be in color.'

"It was much more costly than black-and-white, and a risk because no one had shot in color over here before. Lew, as always, backed us and we sorted out many of the early problems of shooting in color. In fact, we became authorities on color TV; other producers would ring us for technical advice, ask about blue backing and what colors to wear and not to wear, and so on."

No Strings

Thunderbirds was conceived in 1963. "You don't just pluck ideas out of the air," Sylvia Anderson says. "If you take *Supercar*, *Fireball XL5* and *Stingray*, you can see you have already started to build an International Rescue in a way. You've got the underwater vehicle, spacecraft and car that can do everything. Put all those together and you can see the beginnings of *Thunderbirds*. That's really how it all started to gel."

One of *Thunderbirds*' most popular characters, Lady Penelope, was a very emancipated character compared to her female predecessors in the earlier series. Penelope's creation reflected Sylvia Anderson's feelings about her own position in the company, by that time called Century 21 Productions. "I was the only female member of a male team; on the board of directors, I was the only woman, although of course we had women in our crew who were brilliant.

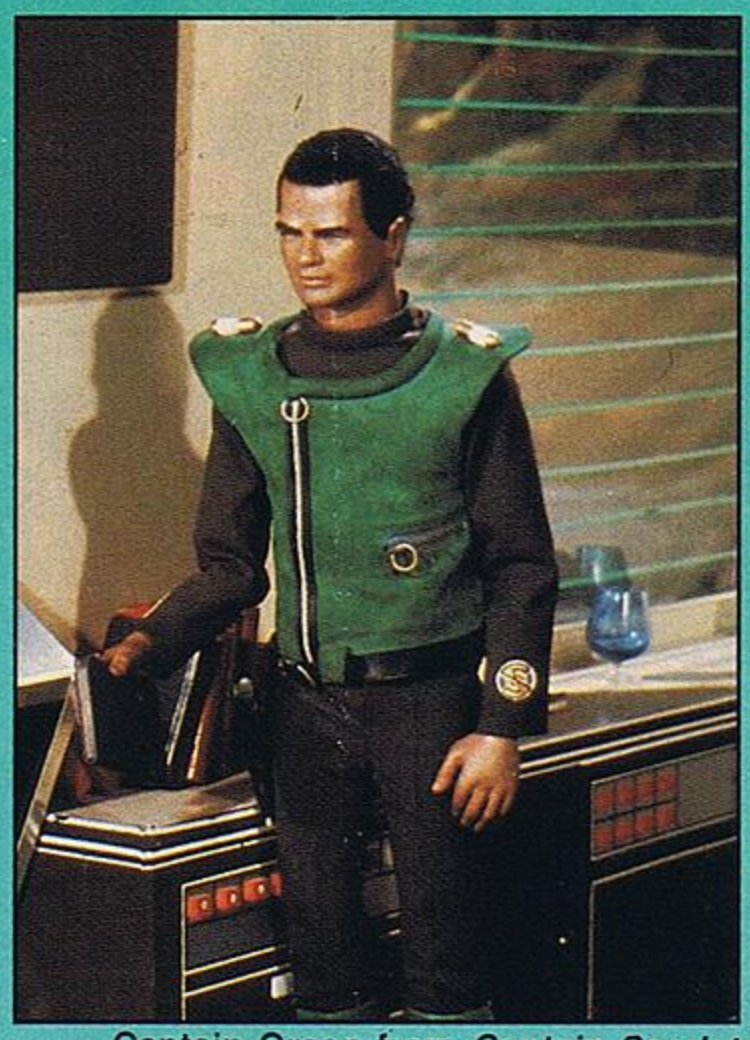
"I wanted to progress from Marina in *Stingray*, who said nothing, and from Venus in *Fireball XL5*, who was very much a man's idea of a glamorous sidekick. I wanted someone who had an identity of her own; otherwise, she would always be reduced to taking the orders and passing them along the line, or dealing with the feminine part of whatever operation it was.

"When I came to create the character, I thought, 'What's an interesting background? I know—a stately home.' I felt that making her an aristocrat and secret agent meant she could retain her femininity, but because of her background and social connections, she would be able to lead her own life. As she was apart from the main body of International Rescue, not being based on the island with the Tracy boys, she was able to have an identity. She was a counter-balance to the other characters. Then, the interplay between her and her butler, Parker, meant we had for the first time in our series a genuine humorous element. And they were down-to-Earth characters; they weren't up there dressed in uniforms and flying around in weird-looking objects."

Parker's voice was taken from a real person, a waiter called Arthur, although he never knew it. "Gerry and I used to lunch at this pub just outside London, and there was an elderly retainer-type working there. I mean, he was *very* ancient. He shuffled along and sweated a lot, and it dripped in the soup! He would drop his h's in all the wrong places and put them in in all the wrong places—you know; 'Fings hi could tell you.' So, we took actor David Graham [Parker's voice] to lunch there and said, 'Listen to him, because he's a marvelous role model for Parker.' " Of the Tracys, she adds, "They were sort of a steal from *Bonanza*!"

Century 21 modelmaker Mary Turner based her puppet of Lady Penelope on Sylvia. But she didn't realize that at the time. "No, I really didn't. We'd had problems developing the character's puppet, and when Mary came with the face she had worked on, I recognized immediately it was what I wanted, with a

(continued on page 70)



Scarlet Photo: Copyright 1967 ITC

Captain Green from *Captain Scarlet and the Mysterons* may have been one of the Andersons' more life-like creations.

Thunderbird 1, International Rescue's supersonic rocket, fights for right—and dear life—in one of the show's 32 episodes.

All Thunderbirds Photos: Copyright 1964 ITC

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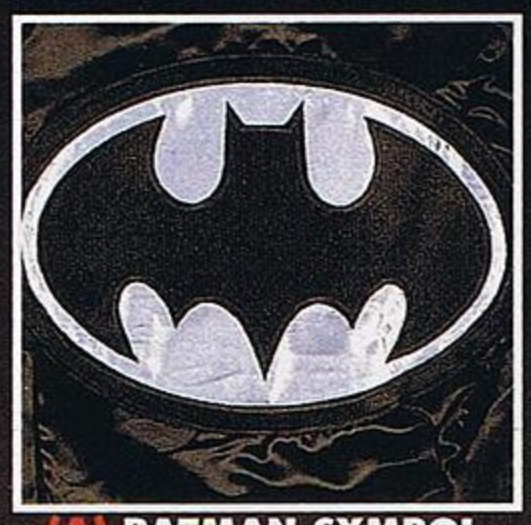
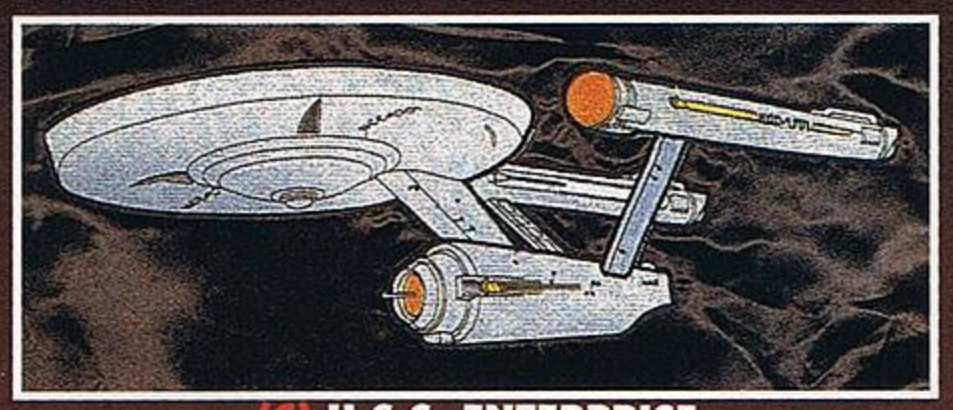


(A) BATMAN SYMBOL

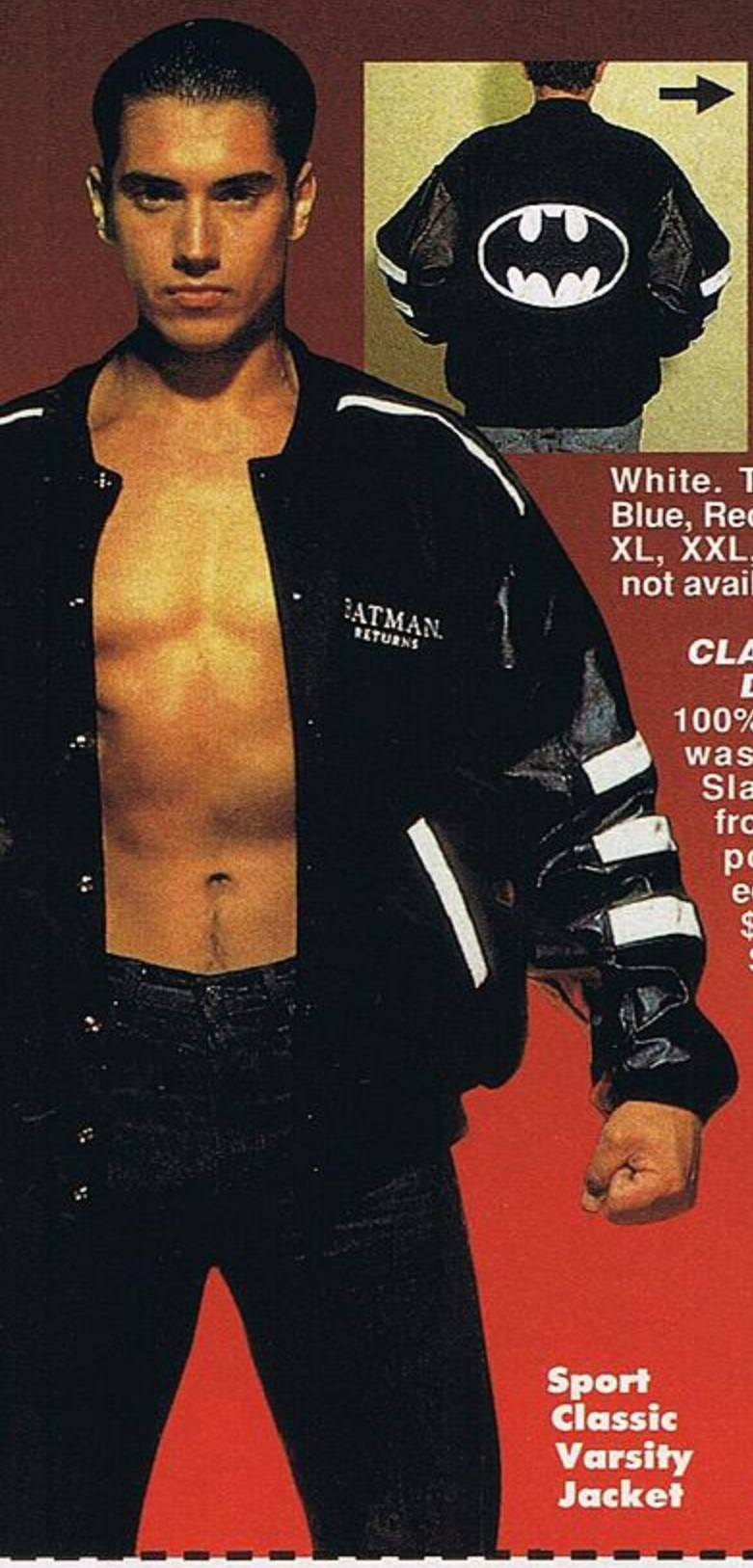
(B) GOTHAM WORKS



(C) U.S.S. ENTERPRISE

(D) TREK 25th ANNIVERSARY

(E) NEXT GENERATION



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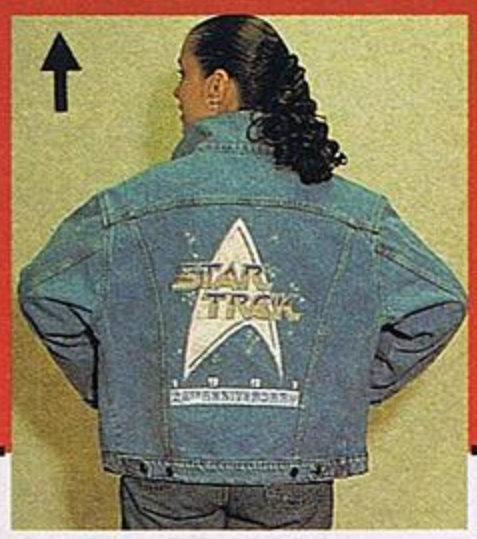

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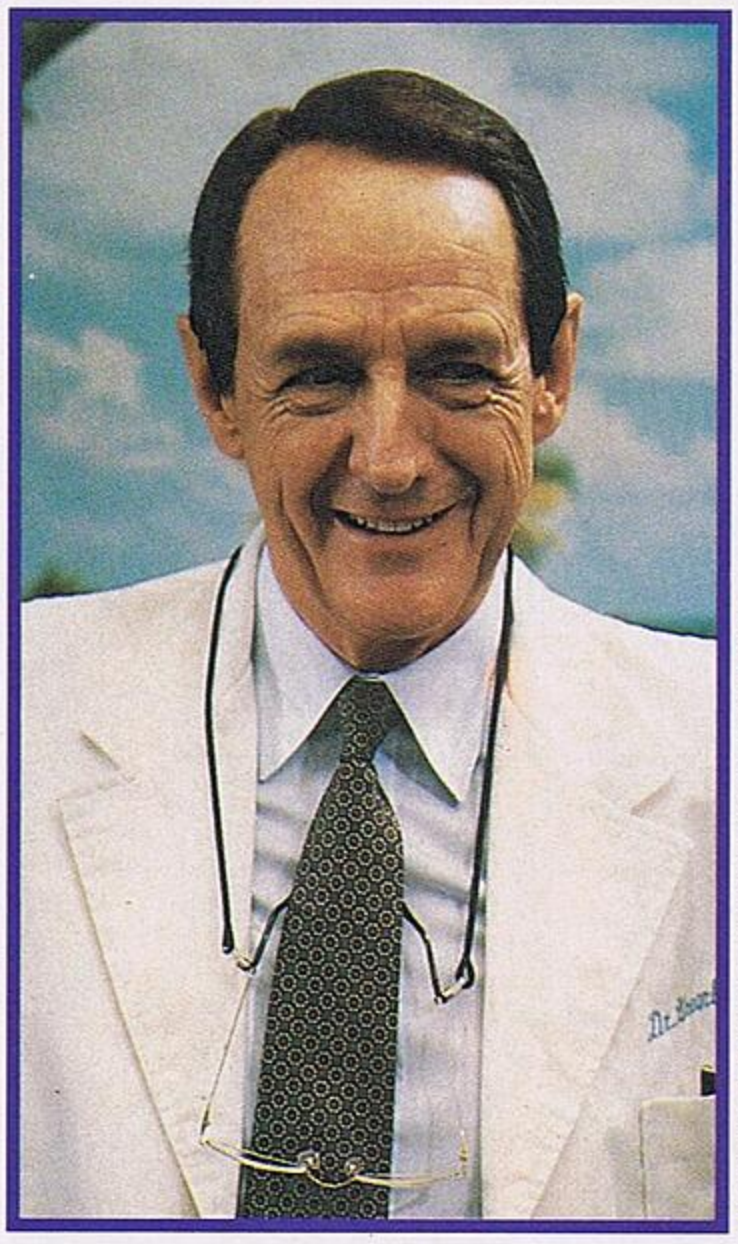
Encountering aliens, Tribbles & shrinking men,
William Schallert visited the science fiction universe.

CHARACTER STAR

For the past 30 years, he has occupied a very comfortable niche as one of TV's most avuncular family men/father figures; those twinkling eyes can be seen in hundreds of sitcom episodes, that friendly voice (heard in countless commercials) enthusiastically invites us to try out/taste/test-drive every product under the Sun. Is this all there is to actor William Schallert?

Hardly. The easygoing on-screen personality he has perfected might be a good reflection of Schallert the Man, but it doesn't do full justice to Schallert the Actor, who takes his craft *very* seriously. Years before his lucrative stints as Patty Duke's TV father, *Get Smart*'s tottering Admiral Hargraves and Grandpa to *The Torkelsons*, he honed his talents on the stage, studied British repertory theater in England, even lectured at Oxford. And early in his career, he also turned up regularly in science fiction—the film genre which, in fact, gave him his *first* big-screen break, when Schallert played one of the leads in the low-budget SF melodrama *The Man from Planet X*.

"I've always felt very beholden to [producers] Aubrey Wisberg and Jack Pollexfen [FANGORIA #35] for recognizing that I was a usable actor and putting me into several of their pictures," Schallert recalls. "The first time they used me was in *The Man from Planet X*, which we made in 1950. At that point, I had been working on the stage for four years, and I had built kind of a reputation in town. I was *starting* to climb the ladder. I wasn't famous or well-known or anything, but as a beginning character actor, a few casting directors knew who I was. Somebody probably suggested me to Wisberg and Pollexfen, or maybe they had seen me work. At the time, I also had a beard, and maybe that helped;



Innerspace Photos: Copyright 1987 Warner Bros.

By TOM WEAVER

the guy I played in *Man from Planet X* was the villain. I was called over there, read for them and got the part."

The moody film, set amidst the rising mists of Scotland's moors, found Schallert fourth-billed as a scientist who is on hand when a small space vehicle—manned by a single, dwarf-sized occupant—sets down in the nearby wilderness. Fellow scientist Raymond Bond and reporter Robert Clarke (FANGORIA #34, #59) attempt to communicate with the seemingly friendly alien, but Schallert, obsessed with learning its secrets, antagonizes and abuses X, which then turns against the humans. The film, a cult favorite today, was the first production for writers Wisberg and Pollexfen, who were on the Hal Roach lot sets constantly, supervising their maiden effort.

"They were an oddly matched couple of guys. Jack Pollexfen was a really strange-looking guy; we used to kid and call *him* the Man from Planet X! Jack was American and Aubrey was British, and they co-wrote the picture. Primarily writers, they were trying to leverage themselves up into the producing end, which they did on this. And of course Edgar Ulmer, who directed it, has quite a good reputation among *cineastes* as the King of the B-Pictures, for doing *film noir* low-budget movies. Edgar was OK. I didn't think the picture was a particularly stylish film or anything like that, but I guess it accomplished what it needed.

"*The Man from Planet X* was exciting *at the time*, representing as it did a big step forward for me, but I didn't think it was a stunning picture or anything like that. Of its genre, it's probably OK. But I must say that Edgar Ulmer made the picture *look* quite interesting. I think it was mostly that he was pretty good with the camera and with the lights, and could do things on the cheap."

"Cheap" was the key word for *Planet X*: The $41,000 film was shot in less than a week, on re-used sets from Ingrid Bergman's *Joan of Arc*, and with special FX which were primitive even by early 1950s standards. "It all seemed kind of ricky-ticky to me," Schallert laughs. "Like

TOM WEAVER, veteran STARLOG correspondent, authored Science Fiction Stars & Horror Heroes *(McFarland, $35). He profiled Lloyd Bridges in STARLOG #182.*

Star Trek Photo: Copyright 1967 Paramount Pictures TV & Norway Productions

Schallert remembers his *Star Trek* with "those little furry balls" in "The Trouble With Tribbles." "They were all over the place."

Women of The Caves 1000 Years From Now!
CAPTIVE WOMEN
ROBERT CLARKE · MARGARET FIELD
GLORIA SAUNDERS · RON RANDELL
Written and Produced by AUBREY WISBERG and JACK POLLEXFEN
Directed by STUART GILMORE

Captive Women Art: Copyright 1952 RKO Radio Pictures

William Schallert played an uncharacteristic bad-guy mutate in the post-apocalyptic *Captive Women*.

Patty Duke Show Photo: ABC

The actor's best-known TV stint was as the much-put-upon dad on ABC's *The Patty Duke Show*.

everything else about the picture, the FX were all done cheap, so there wasn't anything very fancy about 'em. When you shoot a whole feature film in six days, you don't have much time to think about it, you just have to put in long days. And we weren't paid handsomely, either. I think I got $225 for the week. The fellow who played the alien was a very small guy, kind of middle-aged. He mostly just *looked* interesting; I don't know that he was much of an actor. In a way, you look back on pictures like *Man from Planet X* and you say, 'God, that whole thing was just a *joke*,' but it *has* lived on."

Planet X capitalized on the enormous publicity push that RKO was giving Howard Hawks' *The Thing* ("The titles sounded vaguely alike to people, I guess," Schallert adds), and went on to become a box-office hit. Wisberg and Pollexfen hustled to put a second SF picture into production, reuniting *Planet X* hero Clarke, heroine Margaret Field (Sally's mom) and villain Schallert in the post-apocalyptic *Captive Women*.

Mutates & Doctors

"It was originally called *3000 A.D.*," Schallert reminisces. "It was kind of a dumb film, but I thought that it had an interesting premise, the idea of people surviving after the Bomb and living in New York City subways. It was an unusual notion. They had the same plot later in one of the *Planet of the Apes* films [*Beneath the Planet of the Apes*]; *Captive Women* anticipated that. I don't know that Wisberg and Pollexfen ever had any original ideas, but they were very good at grabbing onto ideas that had some merit. I thought *Captive Women* had some possi-

bilities. My wife [Leah—now Lia—Waggner] was also in that, incidentally, in a bit part. We played characters who were not called mu*tants*; we were mu*tates*. I don't know whether that was just illiteracy, or some perverse notion on the part of Wisberg or Pollexfen that mu*tate* was a better word," Schallert laughs.

In the film, the survivors of a devastating atomic war fight amongst themselves in and around the rubble of Manhattan. Schallert, a radiation-scarred member of the Mutate tribe, is banished after contesting Ron Randell's leadership and turns traitor, leading the warlike Up-river men against his own people. "The fellow who did the makeup was Steve Clensos. He had invented a makeup remover called *Clens*, so it was advantageous that his name was Clensos. Steve would make up one side of my face with silver, to show the effects of radiation, and then he also added a scar to it."

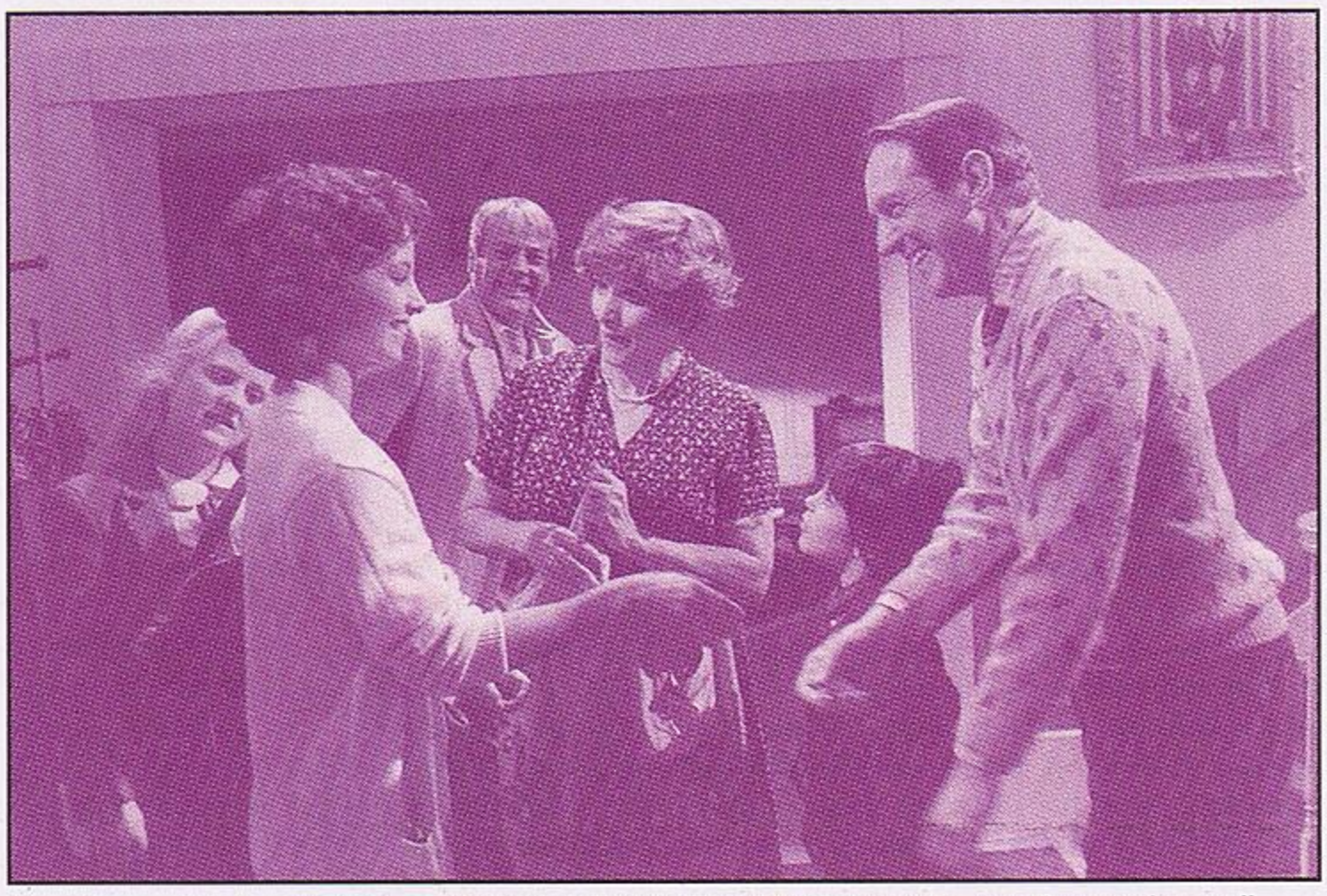
Production of *Captive Women* was hectic, with new scenes being written daily and an inexperienced director having difficulty maintaining order. "Stuart Gilmore had been an editor and I don't know how much directing he had done prior to this," Schallert admits. "*Captive Women*, I guess, was his 'break,' but I *vaguely* remember Gilmore as being a man with not much patience. He was under a lot of pressure. I don't have much recollection of it because we *all* had problems with that picture. It was tough to make.

"Albert Zugsmith was one of the producers on that, along with Wisberg and Pollexfen. After I did *Captive Women* and a couple of other pictures for them, Zugsmith got the notion that I could do just about *anything*, and he became quite a champion of mine. He did his best to get me into everything he made, in one way or another. In fact, when he was at Universal, he tried to put me into his films, in parts that I was totally *unsuited* for. He tried to force me on Orson Welles on *Touch of Evil* [1958], to play the part played by Joseph Calleia, for God's sake! Calleia was 30 years older than I, and he was also Mexican, which is what the character was *supposed* to be! It was just insane! Zugsmith used me in *The Girl in the Kremlin* [1957], and I played Joseph Stalin's brother. I remember trying to do this dumb Russian accent, and when I finally saw it, I thought to myself, 'Oh, God!' Well, all I can say is, a job is a job, and at a certain stage of your life, you just take what comes."

One of Schallert's best-remembered small roles was his supporting part in Zugsmith's later *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. "That was a very good film. Jack Arnold directed it, and I thought Jack was a very stylish director. *Shrinking Man* had an interesting story by Richard Matheson [STARLOG #150-#151]; his son is one of the writers on my series *The Torkelsons*. *Shrinking Man* was a superior piece of writing. I played the doctor who diagnosed that Grant Williams was shrinking.

Planet X Photo: Copyright 1951 United Artists/Courtesy Tom Weaver

The Man from Planet X **today enjoys a cult reputation, but Schallert remembers it as "kind of ricky-ticky."**

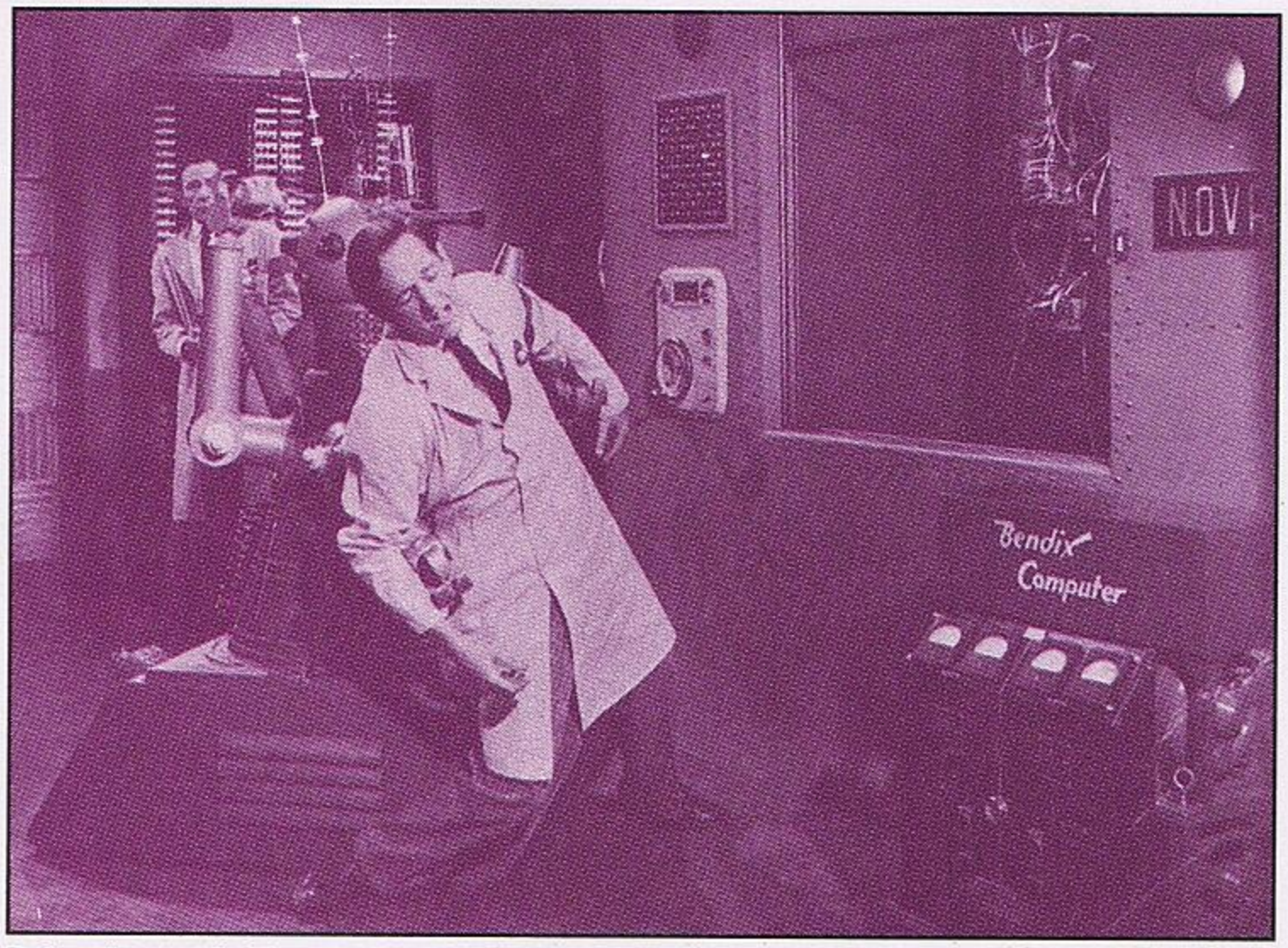


Zone Photo: Copyright 1983 Warner Bros./Courtesy Joe Dante

Working with Joe Dante on *Twilight Zone: The Movie* was "a good experience."

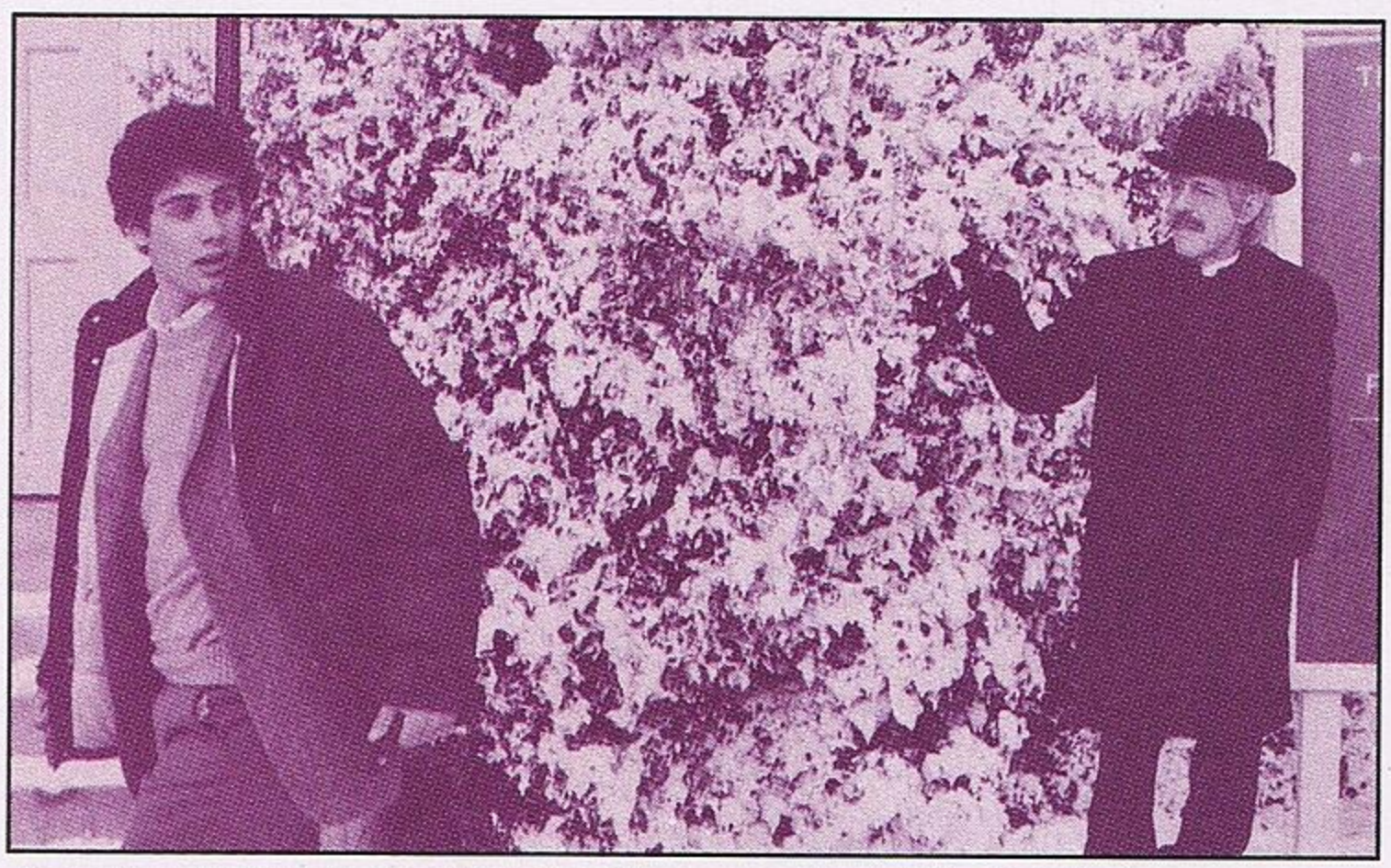
"You could almost say that Aubrey Wisberg and Jack Pollexfen were to blame for bringing Albert Zugsmith into the motion picture business—depending upon how you feel about Zugsmith's pictures! But he did make *Written on the Wind* [1956], which garnered Dorothy Malone an Oscar. In general, his pictures had a strong sense of schlock about 'em, but then Wisberg and Pollexfen were not exactly the top of the heap, either!

"It was nice that Zugsmith used me so often; I was just trying to *survive* during that early- to mid-50s period. The key thing about an actor who was in my position was staying alive without doing anything *but* acting. That's really tough to do, but I managed, partly because my wife was willing to tolerate it. But by 1954, we had three kids. You would step from one slowly-sinking rock to another as you crossed the stream of life, and kept hoping for a new rock. It was always dicey until 1957, '58, when I began to work more, and especially in '59—that year I really worked a lot. From then on, I was OK."



Gog Photo: Copyright 1976 United Artists/Courtesy Tom Weaver

Being "strangled by a robot" is Schallert's main memory of *Gog*.



Gremlins Photo: Copyright 1984 Warner Bros./Courtesy Joe Dante

Appearing in Dante's *Gremlins* was "kind of accidental" for Schallert.

Actors & Martians

His father was Edwin Schallert, former drama editor of *The Los Angeles Times* and the dean of West Coast critics. William Schallert went to school in Los Angeles and played Corbaccio in a UCLA stage production of *Volpone*—a performance which had 20th Century Fox interested in signing him, until they learned his draft status. After a hitch with Uncle Sam (he graduated pilot training in 1945 as a fighter pilot, and discharged as a first lieutenant), Schallert returned to UCLA to finish up, and appeared in more plays.

While taking a course in directing, he was cast in "a lot of the projects that other directors were doing. I would just play these little scenes, but in that one semester I did maybe 10 or 12 scenes, and I probably learned the fundamentals of how to act by doing that. Or, I should say, I found out *what I could do*. You know, you really can't *learn* acting; you can either do it or you can't. You can get *better* at it, and training can certainly help, but you find out very quickly whether you *can* do it. By the time that semester was over, I had a sense of myself, especially in comedy."

After leaving UCLA, Schallert became involved with the Circle Theatre, and gradually became one of its owners. He made his film debut in *The Foxes of Harrow* (1947) and has appeared in approximately 80 movies since. During his early years, Schallert frequently played bit or supporting parts in SF and fantasy films, some of which he remembers (*Mighty Joe Young*, *Them!*, *Gog*), others of which he doesn't (*Port Sinister*, *Invasion U.S.A.*, *The Monolith Monsters*). Working in the genre suited him just fine, since "I was a big reader of *Astounding Science Fiction* from about the War's end on up through the early '50s. I used to read it all the time; I remember A. E. Van Vogt and Isaac Asimov, the Foundation stories in particular.

"I worked for Ivan Tors, who did a lot of that kind of thing; I did some stuff for him that was kind of junky, but it was good fun. *Gog* I remember, because I got strangled by a robot! They had robot suits for that film, with people inside them." An episode of TV's *Science Fiction Theater*, also for Tors, paired Schallert with stage and screen star Edmund Gwenn—an experience Schallert recalls vividly. "We played Martians: He was a rather benign Martian and I was his assistant, trying to keep him under control and not let him do too much good. Gwenn was a really wonderful guy to work with. He had already done all of his great movie stuff and had retired, but he had terrible arthritis in his knees from having played football when he was younger. He was a very distinguished actor—he had been in the first productions of a couple of George Bernard Shaw's plays, besides winning an Academy Award [as Kris Kringle] for *Miracle on 34th Street*. And here he had to come out of retirement and work in this cheap *Science Fiction Theater* thing because he needed the money—he needed arthritis treatment. It was really sad. We [actors] didn't have a pension and health plan back then. Even in those days, if you got a really crippling disease, it could exhaust your funds."

On TV, Schallert was also briefly featured as a regular on the small-screen *Commando Cody*, playing sidekick to Judd Holdren, who wore Republic's familiar bullet-helmeted rocket suit. "*Commando Cody* was shot at Republic, which was a kind of 'beginner's studio'—they didn't have much money. It was the bottom of the ladder, but they cranked out Westerns and serials. In 1952, they were still making serials, and they decided they would make a science-fiction serial called *Commando Cody*. By the way, Commander *Corey* was the star of a live TV science-fiction show called *Space Patrol*, and I used to play heavies on that on a regular basis. Commander Corey was a well-known character, and I think Republic just ripped the name off for *Commando Cody*.

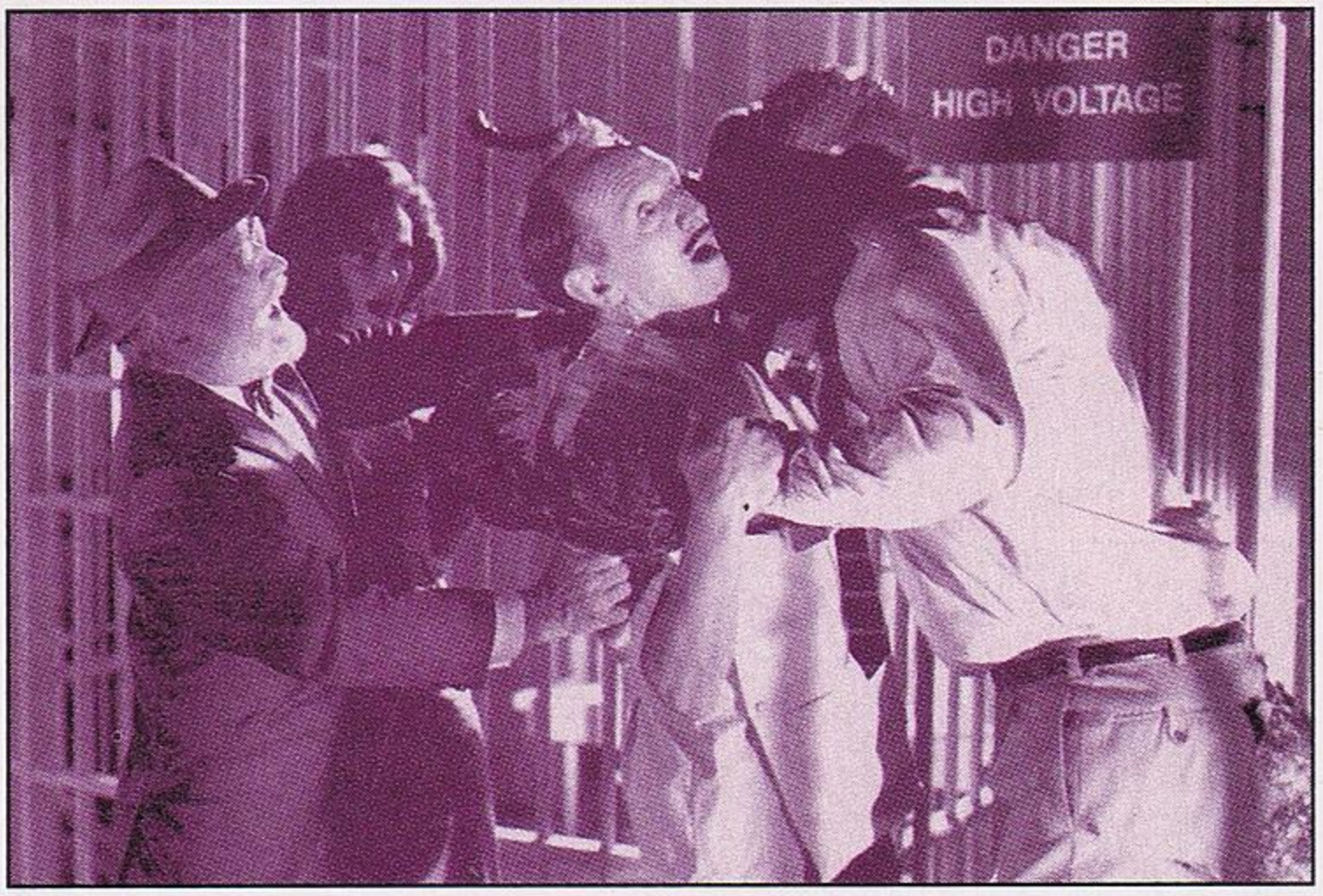
"*Commando Cody* was going to be done as a serial, in 12 episodes. Republic was also thinking that they might release it as a TV show. So, it was kind of a hybrid, as a theatrical serial and also partially made as a TV series. It was a *Buck Rogers*-type series about traveling in a spaceship. They had a big spaceship mock-up, split in half; we would climb up in there and do whatever we had to do. It was dumb writing. An actress named Aline Towne was in it, too; she was actually quite a good actress, *I* thought. And Judd was OK; he wasn't a terrific actor, but he was a manly-looking guy, the kind of guy you would cast in that. I played his sidekick/assistant; I did those types of 'other guy' roles at Republic, generally somebody with a sense of humor 'cause I could do comedy pretty well."

Schallert appeared only in the first three segments of *Commando Cody* before he managed to pry himself out of the series. "Once I found out what they were going to pay me, and thought about it, I said to my agent, 'We gotta get out of this.' I didn't think I could live on it—even though it was probably as much money as I was going to make that year anyway! They were going to pay me $150 a week for 40 weeks, which was $6,000 for the whole year. I didn't see how I was going to survive on that, especially since I couldn't do anything else. So, I managed to get out of it—which was, in a way, insane. Later that year, I went to England on the Fulbright Fellowship. But *Cody* was one of those quickly-sinking rocks that I managed to stand on for a short time."

Other 1950s films roles included an early Roger Corman quickie, the switched-sex Western *Gunslinger* (and the notorious all-star Irwin Allen production *The Story of Mankind*. "In *Gunslinger*, I was the marshal, Beverly Garland was my wife, and once I got shot—in the first scene—*she* became the marshal. That was the only time I ever worked for Corman, so I guess he wasn't impressed! And in *The Story of Mankind*," Schallert adds, laughing, "I played the Dauphin in a scene with Hedy Lamarr, who was Joan of Arc. I'm laughing, because Hedy Lamarr's reputation was as this sexpot, and here she was playing Joan of Arc! I made a lot of money on it, because I had to be in very early for makeup—I had a bald cap in that—and we did it all in one day. I worked until like 11 p.m., very late; it was a long, long day and I got a lot of double-time and overtime. So, I was very happy with the film, simply because of the money I made on it!"

While Schallert worked (somewhat) steadily in pictures throughout the '50s, he insists that he never sought any special niche in the movie business or tried to model himself after any other actor. "No, I never did that, although I have, of course, admired a great many actors for the kind of work they did. If I saw *any*body who I thought it would be nice to be like, it would be Alec Guinness. When I was first starting, Guinness was also starting; I remember seeing *Kind Hearts and Coronets* [1949], in which he played eight roles, and thinking, 'Gosh, I would love to get a shot at something like that, because I think I could do it.' Actually, the thing that I had the most success with when I worked on the stage was comedy. There's a certain kind of comedy that I think I can do as well as anybody; if there was any way that I was ever going to be a star, it would have been from doing stuff like that."

Mant/Matinee Photos: Copyright 1992 Universal City Studios/Courtesy Joe Dante



In *Mant*, the movie-within-the-movie of *Matinee*, Robert Cornthwaite (in hat) and Schallert confront the half-man, half-ant.

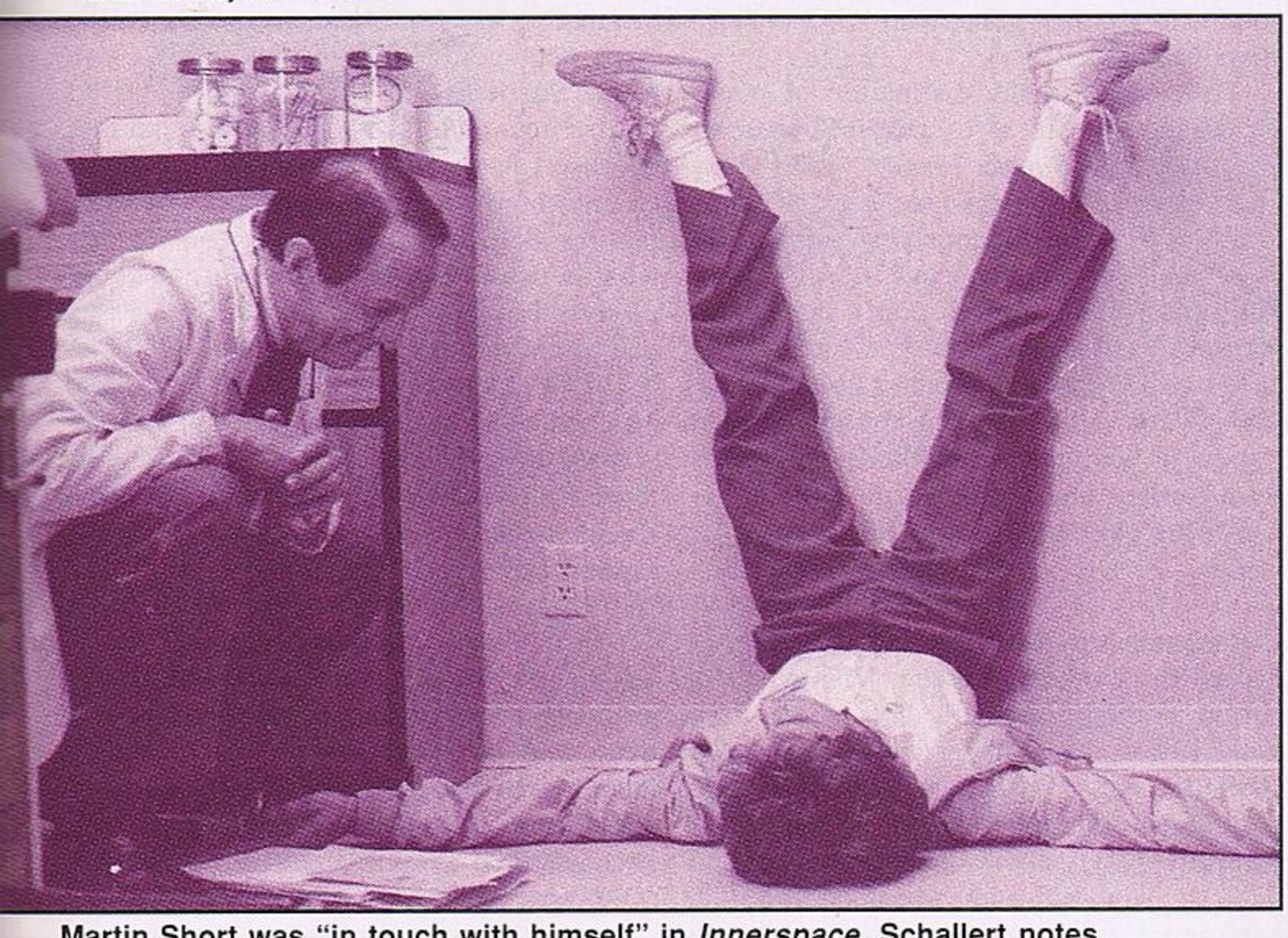
From 1963-66, Schallert played Martin Lane, the sorely-tried but always-patient father on TV's *The Patty Duke Show*. The ABC half-hour sitcom remains, like it or not, Schallert's best-known claim to fame, but action and SF fans probably prefer his shorter stints in other shows, *The Wild Wild West* and *Star Trek* in particular. "I enjoyed working on *Wild Wild West*; there I got to play an assortment of different roles. When [co-star] Ross Martin had a heart attack, he was out for several episodes, and Charles Aidman and I replaced him serially as Jim West's [Robert Conrad] partner. They offered that to me mainly because I had played such a variety of characters and they thought I could do almost anything; 'OK, Schallert, we'll stick you in there and you can play all these wild characters the way Ross did.' "

Asked about reported friction between stars Conrad and Martin, Schallert can offer little input. "There was never any evidence of that on the set; from what I saw, it seemed to me that they got along OK. Conrad's a kind of a prickly guy, and he would go through phases where he was doing what seemed to be rather foolish things, but actually he's a pretty good actor. People don't give him credit for very much, but I've seen him do some good things in movies-of-the-week. He didn't have the technical resources of Martin, who was a very wide-ranging actor with a lot of facets to his personality and his skill, but Conrad does what he does very well. To tell the truth, I always thought they got along pretty well and seemed to have a lot of fun on the show. Maybe I missed some of the bad stuff."

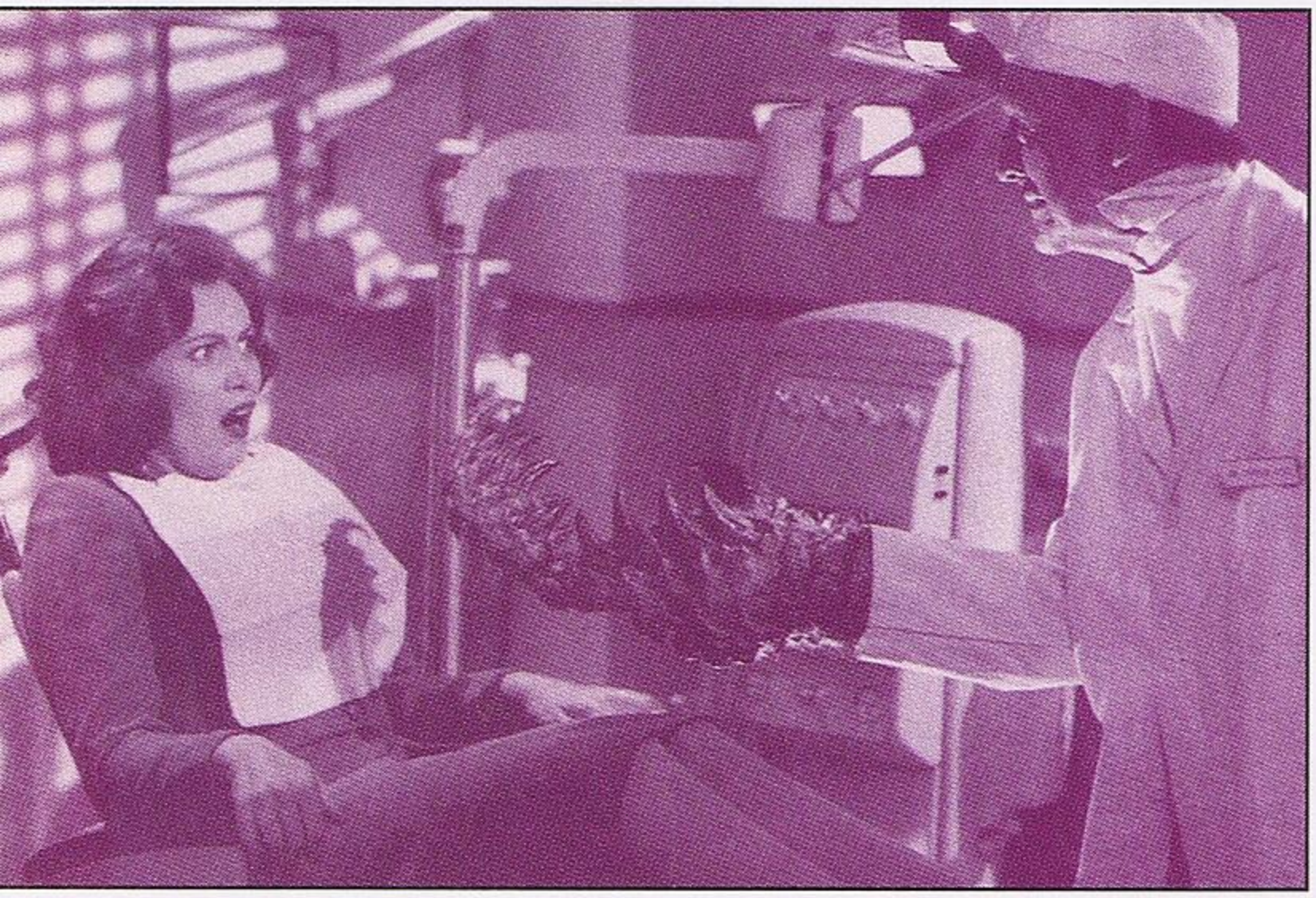
Tribbles & H-Bombs

Star Trek must be a subject about which Schallert is asked regularly, because he recalls the experience, *and* the episode title, without the slightest prompting. " 'The

Photo: Courtesy Joe Dante



Martin Short was "in touch with himself" in *Innerspace*, Schallert notes.



Cathy Moriarty gets a hand from Schallert in *Mant*, lensed in Rumble-Rama.

Trouble With Tribbles!' I remember those little furry balls that they used for the Tribbles—they were all over the place—and you had to treat 'em as though they were alive. Stanley Adams, who played the trader who sold them, was one of the funniest guys I had ever met in my life. He was a comedy writer—I think he used to write for Red Skelton—and I always enjoyed working with him. And Charlie Brill, who's also a funny fellow, played my lieutenant, who was the nasty guy who started all the trouble."

In the episode, a favorite among Trekkers, Schallert played Nilz Barris, official in charge of the delivery of a huge supply of grain to a distant planet. Some of the episode's humor derived from insults arrogantly tossed by Captain Kirk (William Shatner) at the uptight Barris; fans prefer to ignore the fact that Barris' misgivings about Kirk are well-founded, since Kirk *does* in fact do a thorough job of bungling his important assignment.

Schallert recalls, "The character I played was characteristic of the way they sometimes cast me, which is as a stuffy sort of bureaucrat. Those aren't rewarding roles, they're really not. It was OK; I played it, but it's not the kind of part I would like to be remembered for the rest of my life. Unfortunately, it will be, I guess," he laughs. "I probably saw an episode or two of *Star Trek* prior to working there, but I wasn't a devotee of science fiction shows; there are very few that I watch regularly. For whatever reason, that show never grabbed me."

Schallert even had his own shot at a starring role in a series in 1963, when Richard Donner directed him in the TV pilot *Philbert*. "That was the first thing that Dave DePatie and Friz Freleng did together; they're the people who created the Pink Panther character. I played a cartoonist, and the character that I drew was Philbert—a little wise-ass guy with a snap-brim hat and a perky attitude. He suddenly came to life and walked off the page, and entered my life. We had somewhat the same sort of relationship that Bill Bixby and Ray Walston did in *My Favorite Martian*: He would mess up my life, and then get me *out* of the mess. The problem with the show was that it cost about 50 percent more than anything else being done at the time, because of the animation. The average half-hour show in those days cost $50,000 an episode (roughly one-twelfth of what they cost today!), and mine was going to be $75,000. Friz Freleng told me that's what killed it; ABC wasn't willing to spend that kind of money. I thought, when I saw it, that what I did was good, and if it had gone, who knows where it would have led?"

The actor had the distinction of being assassinated with a hydrogen bomb in *Colossus: The Forbin Project*, 1970's entrant in the computers-take-over SF subgenre. "I thought [director] Joe Sargent did a stylish job with that, and it was a very interesting idea, too. I don't think that picture made much money, which is too bad; it really deserved a better fate, because it was very well-done. I'm the only person I know of who was assassinated with an H-Bomb—they usually don't go to that extent of overkill to get rid of *one* person!"

Scientists & Icons

In a much lighter vein, Schallert played Professor Quigley in the Disney live-action comedy/fantasies *The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes* and *The Strongest Man in the World*. "Those were very satisfying. I thought, number one, that the films themselves were always very well done and a lot of fun to watch. Number two, the experience of working on 'em was very good. Disney was a quality lot to work on: It's a nice place, very democratically organized. Because it started as an animation studio, they didn't have much of a class system there. When they went to the commissary, there wasn't an executive dining room—[Walt] Disney got in the line with everybody else." Schallert adds that he definitely saw the "writing on the wall" for Disney's Kurt Russell, who starred in both films (as well as in the Schallert-less *Now You See Him, Now You Don't*) as Dexter Riley. "Kurt was my idea of an extremely talented young actor. I thought, 'This guy really can act'—and, God knows, that has really been proven with time. For a long time, I didn't think he got his due, but he is now."

From 1979 to '81, Schallert was the president of the Screen Actors Guild, an organization with which he is still affiliated. In the 1980s, three of the four features in which he appeared were helmed by fantasy filmmaker Joe Dante. "I like Joe a lot, I think he's a very inventive and creative director. I didn't want to do *Twilight Zone: The Movie* when they first approached me because they were paying minimum; at that stage in my life, I said, 'I'm not going to work for minimum; it's ridiculous.' And, 'Why is Steven Spielberg so *cheap*?' is what I *really* wanted to know! But that's the kind of a shop they were running, because they didn't know how this picture was going to turn out. Everybody in the cast was getting the same thing—everybody, that is, except the individual star of each episode; they were getting more. But anyone who was playing a supporting role got minimum—that included people like Patricia Barry and Kevin McCarthy [STARLOG #78].

"It was a wild experience working on that thing because the sets were all done like cartoons. They used forced perspective, and nothing was real-looking. For instance, when you went up the stairs, the steps kept getting smaller the higher you went. So, it was very difficult to go up 'em! Those sets were really fascinating, because I had never worked in that kind of an environment; it had a very cartoon-like feeling that Joe did deliberately; that's what he was after. He had a definite sense of style for this thing. And he wanted me, and some of these other people, in it because he's a great devotee of old films, and especially of old SF films. He particularly wanted to have people in it who were in those films; I have done my share of 'em. I found working with Joe on that to be quite a good experience."

Working for Dante again in 1984's *Gremlins* was "kind of accidental. I had asked Joe for a favor: I was helping a group of people raise some money for the deaf, and they thought that if we could have a premiere showing of *Twilight Zone* someplace, they could raise some money. Joe provided the film, and then he said, 'OK, now you owe me one. I want you to

(continued on page 72)

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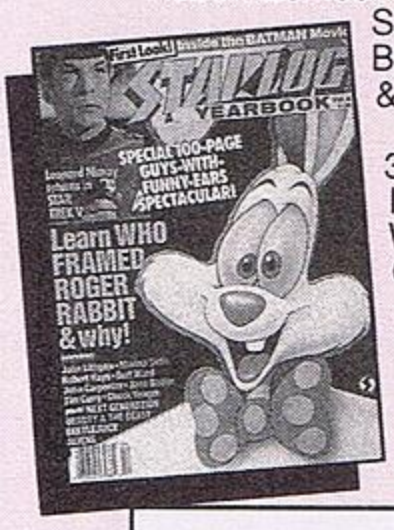
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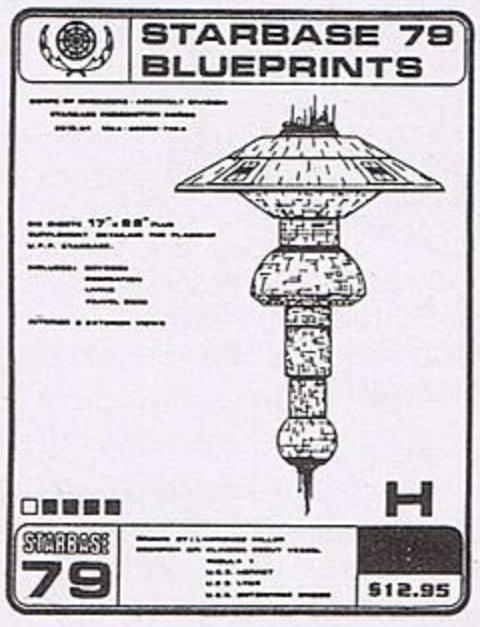

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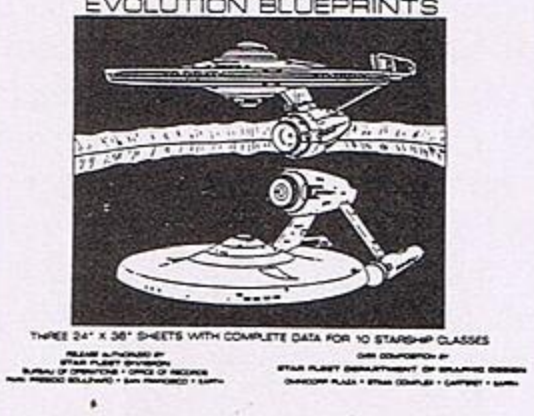

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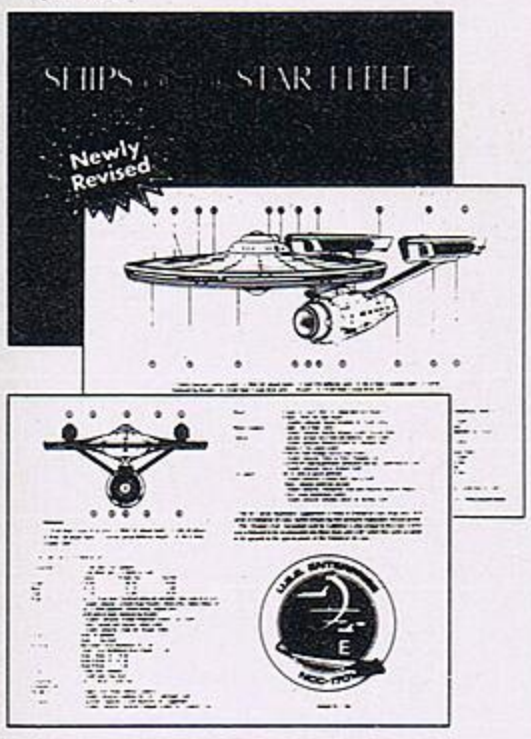

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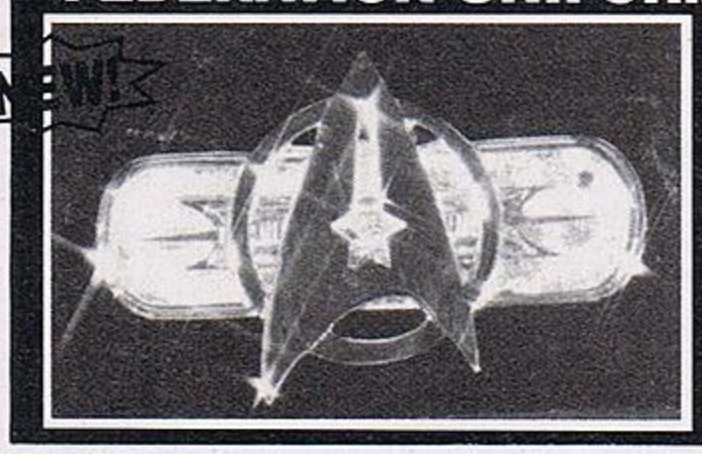

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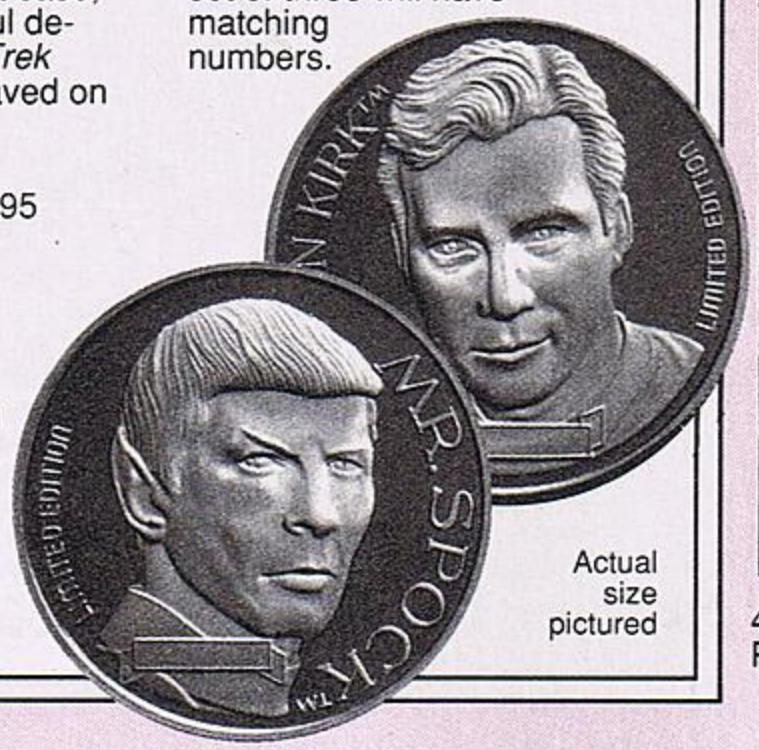

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Scott

(continued from page 51)

oddly enough, was the whole, not surprise, but *turn of events* in the film. One thinks one's dealing with a kind of Frankenstein Monster in the character, but he really becomes more human than the average human as the film progresses, and therefore, in some respect, gains one's sympathy, possibly as much, or even *more* than Deckard!

STARLOG: You tried specifically to achieve a "film noir" mood?

SCOTT: Yes, I saw Deckard as Humphrey Bogart. Well, the whole thing was originally influenced in one sense as a kind of comic strip anyway. That was my "eureka" in reading the script, and feeling that I knew how to do it. That was one of the energies that got me moving into it. It was that we would most certainly do a sort of comic strip!

But in the process, the film became much more serious than I had imagined. So, when doing it, the seriousness of some of the film's aspects emerged, and in some ways, that fought against it becoming a pure comic strip.

STARLOG: Why so little use of the Rachael character?

SCOTT: She was there originally to present the predicament of the central character, who hunts replicants and then falls in love with one.

We had more scenes originally written, but never shot. Because the movie's basic thrust just didn't go that way. You've got to decide what your movie *is*. At that early stage, it was between a love story or an adventure. And even now, I find that certain portions of the love story are very good but, whichever way you look at it, it *does* slow down the film. I just don't think I could have done more. It would have gone against the movie's thrust, it would have been making another kind of movie.

STARLOG: Don't you think that in a case like *Blade Runner*, the elaborate special FX and sets have a tendency to overshadow the picture?

SCOTT: No. I think I kept it in place on this one. And, funnily enough, I think I kept it in place on *ALIEN*, too.

The FX are there, especially if you're doing a film which involves a different time period. Then, obviously, if you *really* know what you're going to do, then you're going to be presenting your environment in a certain way, which must look real, but has its place. Because if it upstages the movie's actual contents, and characters, then it becomes, usually, a lousy science fiction movie. The best SF movies in this area have a balance.

STARLOG: Was Doug Trumbull your first choice for the special effects?

SCOTT: Oh yes, absolutely! Doug started it off, then he was involved in his own project [*Brainstorm*], so then I worked entirely with David Dryer and Trumbull's team of guys at EEG [Trumbull's then-FX company]. Dryer became essentially the special FX director, and did a brilliant, brilliant job.

STARLOG: And the score?

SCOTT: The music is all by Vangelis. I would think that you could almost put the "street music" into being effects, but I was very happy with the track.

I chose Vangelis, but he's pretty much the kind of man you leave to it. We did a fair amount of work, changing tracks around. But Vangelis very definitely works on his own.

STARLOG: You have been described as a perfectionist by various people. Is being a perfectionist important?

SCOTT: I am a perfectionist, and I think it's totally important. There are too many things that you lose hold of in the process of making a movie. A film can deteriorate fast because you have so many people involved in it. It's a bit like running an army!

STARLOG: Are you afraid of being typecast as a genre director?

SCOTT: That was the instinct at first, but then, I'm beginning to wonder, with everything else I've read, if frankly some of the best material isn't emerging from the SF field anyway.

I find that more and more, just reading the scripts I'm presented with...I'm really looking at cannon fodder for cable TV most of the time. Some of the most original thinking and original ideas are in fact emerging from the SF genre.

So, I've thought, why not? I'll just go into that particular area. I don't think *Blade Runner* has really anything to do with *ALIEN*. In a funny kind of way, it's really a contemporary film. So, I'm no longer concerned about that at all. Therefore, I embrace any ideas that come in from that direction.

STARLOG: Do you personally like SF?

SCOTT: No, not at all! [*Laughs.*] I don't read it. I just happen to have a view on how to do it. I'm now beginning to read SF, but I find much of it heavy going. Some of it has pretensions about idealistic futures and stuff like that, which is very dangerous.

STARLOG: What were you trying to say in *Blade Runner*?

SCOTT: With *Blade Runner*, I intended to entertain, but the film is also about the life of the living. If that message comes through, then terrific!

Additional *Blade Runner* coverage can be found in these issues of STARLOG:

Philip K. Dick (#55, #150, #165)
Harrison Ford (#48)
Rutger Hauer (#63, #95, #103)
Sean Young (#61)
Daryl Hannah (#103)
Joanna Cassidy (#135)
Brion James (FANGORIA #82)

Anderson

(continued from page 55)

few refinements. I didn't know it was based on me until well into filming, and it was too late to change it then. I would have changed it had I known, through false modesty or something!"

No Puppets

In 1969, the Andersons nearly landed a job that seems an intriguing "What if?". "Michael Billington was one of the leads in *UFO*, and [007 film producer] Harry Saltzman was looking for a new James Bond, things having gone sour with George Lazenby. I thought Harry might consider Michael, who seemed perfect for the part. Harry looked at some *UFO* rushes and was very interested. That didn't work out, of course, but then he approached us to do the FX on the next Bond film [*Diamonds Are Forever*].

"We were thinking of ways of doing it when United Artists decided to go with someone else. That was disappointing, and had it come together, I think we would have done a good job on it."

Every so often, rumors circulate that *Thunderbirds* may be revived. Sylvia Anderson thinks the idea unlikely and possibly unwise. "If you made it again as a puppet series, you would inevitably want to improve it, update things, and that might take away from the charm.

"There again, if Gerry were involved, he wouldn't work with me, due to personal hang-ups. So, the original team wouldn't be there. I'm not saying they couldn't form another team as good, but there was a lot of heart in that series.

"I've seen too many remakes that have been spoiled, where you think, 'Oh dear, why did they do that?' Inevitably, you're going to get different people who don't have the same attachment and who want to streamline things."

These days, Sylvia Anderson acts as European talent scout for Home Box Office, working out of Pinewood Studios. She also has a parallel career as a writer, and her 1983 mainstream novel, *Love and Hisses*, is in development as a TV mini-series.

What is her reaction to the new upsurge of interest in *Thunderbirds*? "Stunned, I think," she says. "But I believe part of the show's appeal was that nobody in it was ever killed or even really hurt. You didn't see limbs and blood flying around. Things are *far* too realistic now, and far too gritty. Childhood is very brief and it's the one time in your life you can devote to dreams and ideals. That should be preserved."

And what about "FAB," the catchphrase used in the series? Was it an acronym? "It's simply short for fabulous, a buzz word of the '60s," Sylvia Anderson explains. "I'm sorry to disappoint you, but it doesn't stand for anything!" ✯

Bernheim

(continued from page 33)

ideas," she recalls. "The letter said something like, 'Dear Robin, we know you wrote for the show before. We desperately need ideas from writers we know can deliver. Please come back.' "

She didn't, but she did write two episodes for *Beyond Reality*, Manning & Beimler's SF/fantasy show on the USA Network. "That show should be watched more. They're doing some good stuff with that," she says of the series, which follows two parapsychologists who investigate the supernatural. The series gave her the chance to finally write something "with a real edge" about a death-row prisoner on his way to the electric chair. "That's the one I send out to say that sweet little Robin can write a hard-edged prison show. It's not something people are predisposed to assign me."

That's part of the problem that Bernheim has faced as a female writer in the primarily male-dominated world of hour-long TV drama.

"Let's not talk about producers who are chauvinists. Let's talk about actors, who tend to be the *worst* chauvinists. I can't tell you how many actors come into a casting session and don't shake hands with me because they think I'm just an assistant," she says. "Or let's talk about going to the set. When you're a woman, you walk on the set and they don't assume you're a producer. You know how many times I've been to the set and an assistant director has asked me, 'Where's your meal voucher?' And then I have to introduce myself as a producer. You know how embarrassed that makes people? That has happened time and time again, and that's amusing."

Less amusing is the tendency to pigeonhole female writers as being "soft." "People take one look at me and decide I can't write with an edge. I think I share with many writers the ability to write just about anything, but we're defined in the market by what our opportunities are," she says. "A good writer is a good writer, and if you write good action/adventure, you can write good comedy, too. My career was jump-started. I got lots of credits real fast. I was able to earn my stripes pretty quickly, and once you get some good credits, you don't deal with as much prejudice. So, I think I got lucky."

Although she's enjoying her job on *Quantum Leap*, she still has her hopes pinned on a SF pilot she wrote a year ago for NBC.

"It's really hard to sell science fiction, and it's really hard to get science fiction to stay on the air," Robin Bernheim says. "Americans like science fiction, but they don't like it in their own living rooms."

Her idea may be SF, but in many ways it seems rooted to that fateful plane flight to Denver.

It's called *Dream Master*. ✯

Paull

(continued from page 47)

In this particular instance, even though I had already spent "x" amount of dollars, they just didn't want to spend the extra time—a few days—to shoot it.

With Ridley, there were *always* changes to be made. That's his modus operandi. Ridley likes to see things, and *then* he'll start playing with them and change them. So, we had much more of that, instead of having something started and then totally yanked. We would have something that was 3/4 or perhaps totally built, and then Ridley would change his mind. Sometimes, that would happen, but other times it would be fine.

STARLOG: Did you enjoy speculating on the future?

PAULL: Oh yes, very much, because it was based on concepts in reality that we thought were very valid. One of the things I like about *Blade Runner*'s look is that people are able to see the buildings that they still see today in downtown LA, Chicago or whatever. So, when they see the interiors, [showing] 40 years from now, they can relate to them. I found a lot of reality in the film, and it was a very stimulating experience.

STARLOG: Did you have to design electric animals?

PAULL: We talked at one time about a white electric owl. We also made a bird, almost like a pterodactyl, for an early, early script. We had a special FX team working on it. It had wings that were five feet long, made out of a tubular structure in aluminum, with a synthetic skin over it. It was almost like building a model airplane—and it had to work! We flew it by remote control. But suddenly, it was just another of those things eliminated from the script.

STARLOG: Was there any problem in making things really work as they were supposed to?

PAULL: My only answer to that is—we are in the *movie* business and, by hook or by crook, one way or another, with the right people, I can always make it work! The vehicles were especially difficult because we didn't have enough research and development time. Some of them leaked—we had rain throughout the whole film, so water got inside! Some of the vehicles had exhaust leaks into the interiors. On most of the cars, the window didn't work, because that's a whole big mechanical thing to arrange, and that takes time, so the windows were up, the exhaust and the rain leaked in—it was very uncomfortable inside, but nothing that we couldn't overcome.

STARLOG: Did you work well with Scott and Mead?

PAULL: Oh, yes, I think so. There were tenuous times with Ridley because he's also a designer, but he's a very bright man and I have nothing but respect for him. It was an interesting 14 months. ✯

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Schallert

(continued from page 62)

be in *Gremlins*.' It wasn't much of a part: He wanted me to play the kind of old guy I used to play on *Get Smart*. I played an old priest, spent most of a day doing a lot of stuff (some of it scripted, some of it invented right there). It was really funny stuff. All of it got cut, except for one event at a mailbox—that's all that's left of me in the picture. Joe told me that was all that was left and he asked me if I wanted billing, and I said, 'Absolutely not!' I'm just there for that one quick shot. I'm sorry that the other stuff didn't stay, but I understood why—it didn't advance the story. Obviously, they knew what they were doing, because it did very, very well."

Schallert acted for Dante a third time in 1987's *Innerspace*, in a scene reminiscent of his *Incredible Shrinking Man* doctor gig, examining hypochondriac patient Martin Short. "Working with Martin was terrific, he's such a funny guy and very inventive. And he's a very good actor; not just a funnyman, but also a very honest actor who's very much in touch with himself."

The actor has reunited with Dante for the upcoming *Matinee*. Along with SF vets John Agar (STARLOG #164) and Robert Cornthwaite (STARLOG #178), Schallert appears in a movie *within* the movie "made" by a William Castle-like producer character played by John Goodman.

Today, besides his work in front of the camera, Schallert keeps active with S.A.G.-related projects: He's still the trustee of the Pension and Health Plan, and also one of the trustees of the Motion Picture and Television Fund. "Also, once a year for about six or eight weeks, I serve on the Allocations Committee of the Permanent Charities Committee. We fund a large number of projects of various kinds, mostly having to do with the health area. We've expanded now to deal with homelessness, and in particular with AIDS."

William Schallert never gives retirement a thought. "Oh, no!" he scoffs, as if (at 69) he's surprised at the question. "Sure, I'm old enough to retire, but to tell the truth, I'm working so steadily that as long as people keep asking for me, I guess I'll keep working. Actors really don't retire in the usual sense, because there's nothing to prevent you from working until the day you die. If they need an old person and you're old, maybe you'll get the part.

"And another thing: At that point, your competition will soon begin to disappear. Surviving is everything! And when you survive long enough, you do become a kind of an icon. I've been around long enough, and everything I've *ever* done in my life is being recycled on cable, particularly on Nick at Nite. Eventually, all of this stuff comes home to roost, and unless you were really ghastly, people are very fond of you for it. It's a nice feeling." ☆

It

(continued from page 29)

levels to it, but it's more sections than a tower-type layout."

While Ellis has several intriguing ideas about improving and updating the story, one of the most striking notions involves the comic's unusual cover. "It's a die-cut cover, full color, and it comes in two sections," he explains. "The first section, or level, of the cover depicts the outside of an airlock. You see the buttons and a circular opening and things of that nature, and you also see the shadow of It looming in the foreground. Through the circular cut-out, you look through to the second cover and you can see a guy's horrified face, looking like he's screaming. You lift that top section as if you were opening the airlock, and you see that the guy is all mangled and twisted, with his feet up around his ears—he has been jammed into the airlock. That was Paul Davis' idea."

Dean Zachary, who's handling the artwork on *It!*, "has been a commercial artist with Macy's for quite a few years. This is his very first foray into comics, and he's doing a great job, and *improving* with every issue that he does," praises Ellis. "He's really enthusiastic about this project—he loves the movie, too. Dean's making the characters look reminiscent of *It!*'s characters without *really* looking like the film's actors. And he has designed the ship to where it's still very evocative of the film, but without that 1950s technological naivete."

Millennium has the option to do an *It!* sequel, "so it's quite possible that It will return in one form or another after the conclusion of the mini-series," Ellis adds as an aside. Presently—on top of working on the *It!* comics—Ellis is also busy with two *Man from U.N.C.L.E.* series which he promises will interest adventure, spy and SF fans.

"One's being done by Brian Stellfreeze and Joe Phillips. It takes place in [the '60s era] and details what U.N.C.L.E. thinks is the destruction of THRUSH. The other series—which is being done by Jackson (*Action Comics*) Guice and Don Heck [who did *U.N.C.L.E.* back in the '60s for Gold Key]—takes place about 20 years later, when they find out that they didn't destroy THRUSH; as a matter of fact, THRUSH has taken over, and they just don't know it!"

Back to *It!*, Mark Ellis easily fields the inevitable question, "Why should fans want to pick one up?" "The reasons are various. There's a big groundswell of fans of the so-called 'psychotronic' films, and I think they'll appreciate it. I think *ALIEN* and *Predator* fans will enjoy it; I would *like* to think that the *ALIEN* fans who aren't that familiar with *It!* would have a certain curiosity, just from a historical perspective. And people who simply like a good, blood-curdling type of comics horror story will get a kick out of *It!* We're approaching this whole project with the attitude that we're storyboarding a remake of the film, and that's going to make all the difference." ☆

Bill & Ted

(continued from page 81)

goofy at times," says the actor. "Sometimes we would feel pretty stupid about the whole thing because these characters don't seem to have a whole lot on the ball. But actually, they're not so much stupid as just naive."

Richards and Kennedy didn't come into *Bill & Ted* cold. The pair first took over the voices of the characters in the cartoons, then made the transition from voice to flesh with what Richards describes as "minor adjustments.

"In the cartoon show, we really had to go overboard and exaggerate everything, because the approach was to be so fast-paced. We had to be real spastic all the time, yelling, 'Hey dude,' and not really knowing how our voices would match the cartoon expressions. With live-action, we don't have to be so over the top. We can be as close to normal as a Bill and Ted can be."

Richards also claims that *Bill & Ted* does a better job than usual of taking a film creation and making it work on TV. "What you often get is a film idea that comes to television with everything that made it work missing. It's like you end up with a title and an empty shell. That didn't happen with this show," he maintains. "We've got the vibe and the attitude that made the films work, and we've made them work for the show."

The actor offers that while Kennedy and he had brief, informal conversations with Reeves and Winter (STARLOG #170), their ultimate take on the characters came from the movies themselves.

"You had to start with the movies," he says. "They were successful, so they became the blueprint to playing these characters. Basically, our approach on the show was in keeping with the first film. We wanted to expand on that and make these characters our own, but because of time and script considerations, we were sort of stuck with the first film's spirit. If we wind up doing more, maybe we'll begin to push out more."

Richards, whose genre credits include appearances in *Society*, *Twilight Zone: The Movie* and *Altered States*, recalls that *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures* was shot at lightning speed. "We would be on location in some strange neighborhood, having to react to effects that weren't there and saying things like, 'Bogus, dude.' We felt like we were playing a couple of idiots," he recalls. "But then we realized that Bill and Ted simply had an attitude that was different. Their logic is totally separate from what the rest of the world knows.

"It's like a house could suddenly drop out of the sky, land right in front of them, and they wouldn't question it at all," remarks Evan Richards. "Their only response would be to think that it was 'excellent.' " ☆

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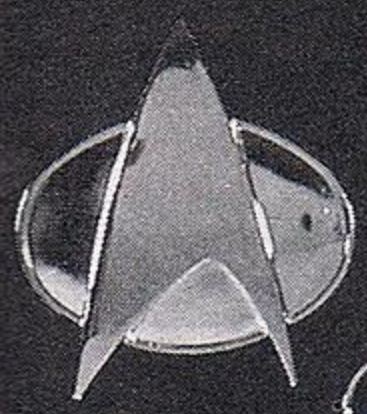

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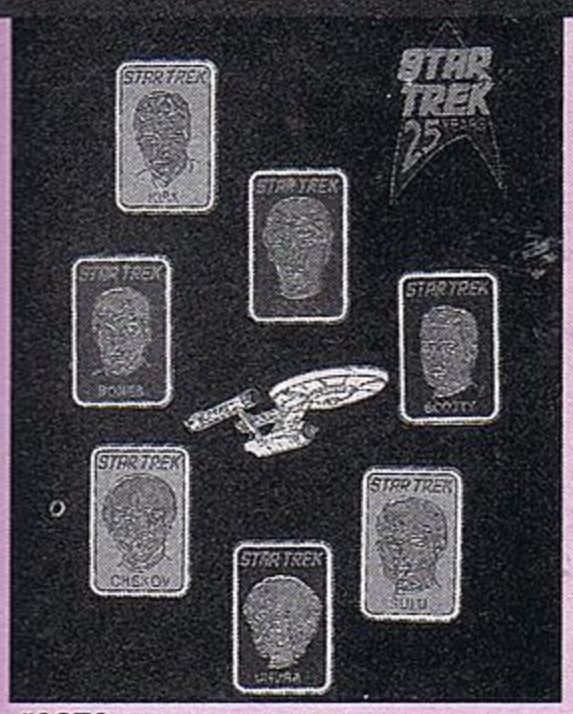

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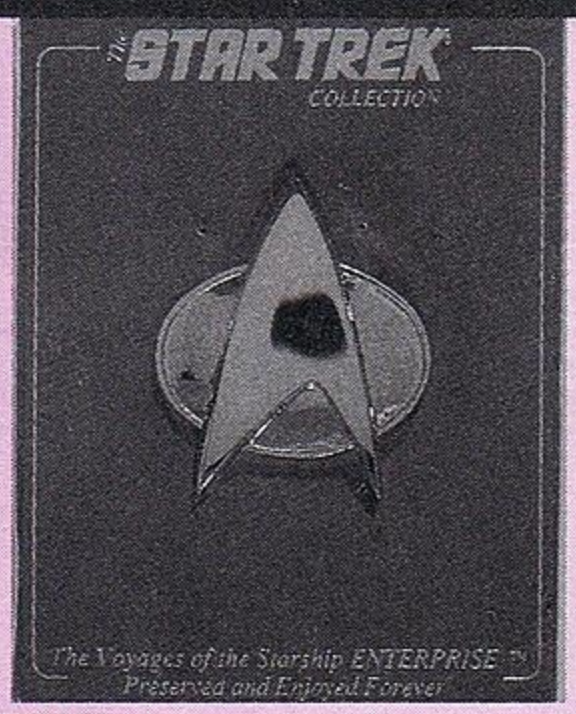

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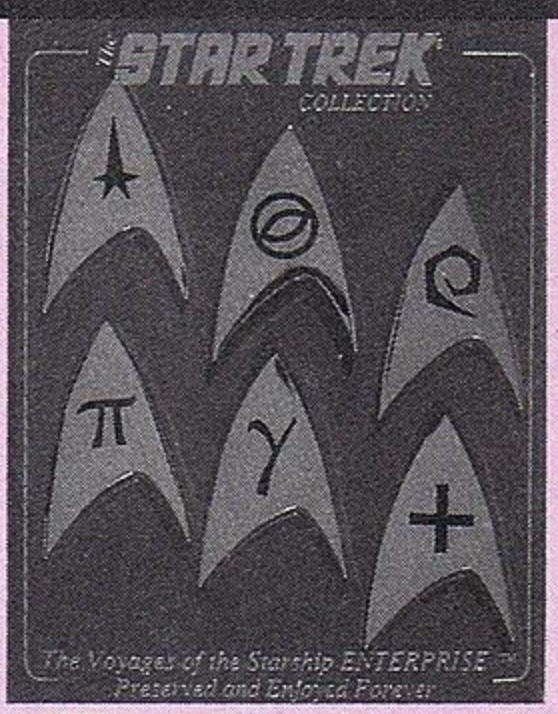

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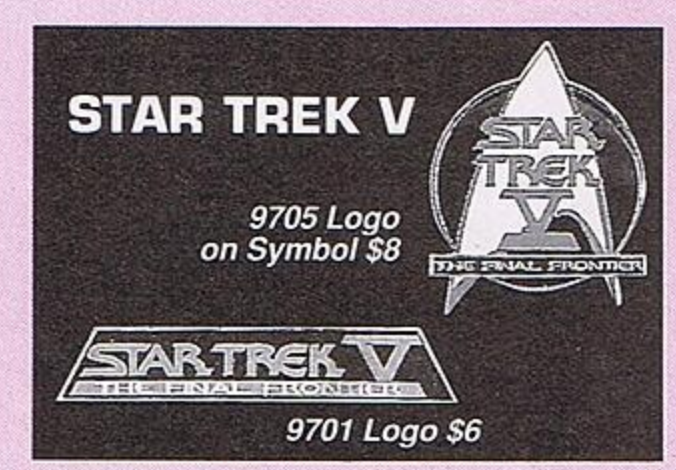

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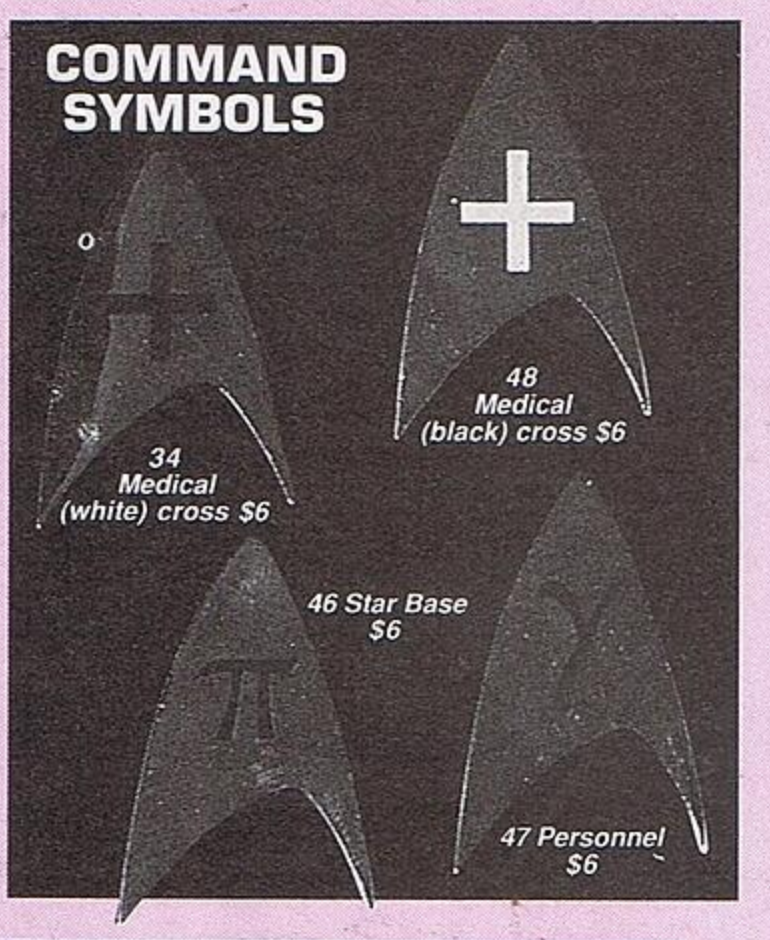

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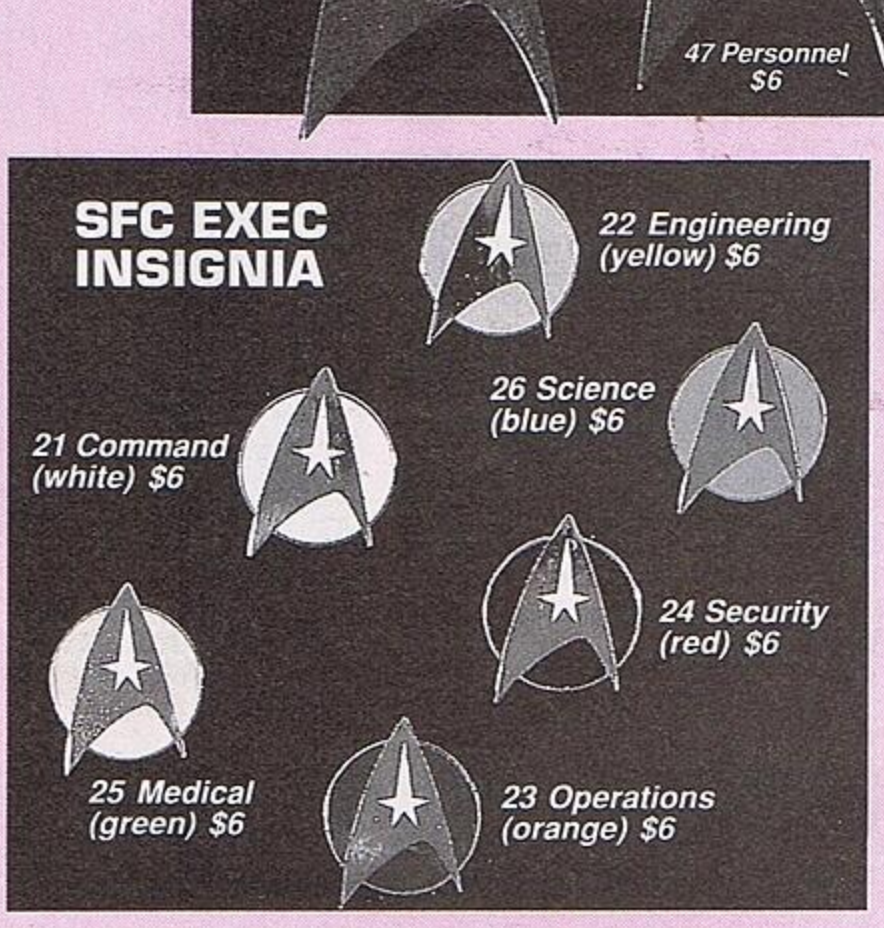

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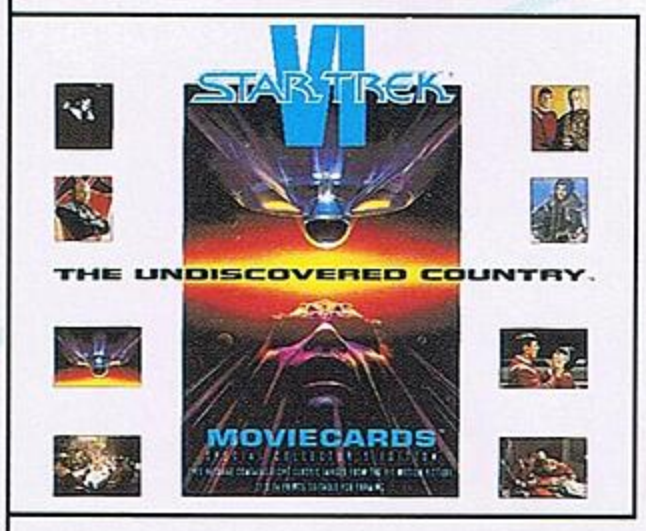

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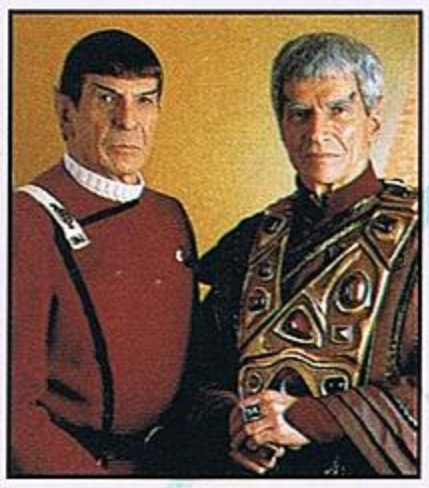

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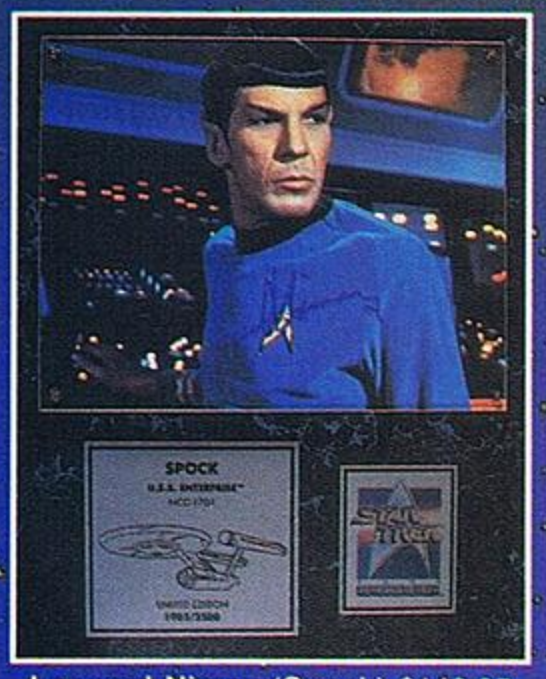

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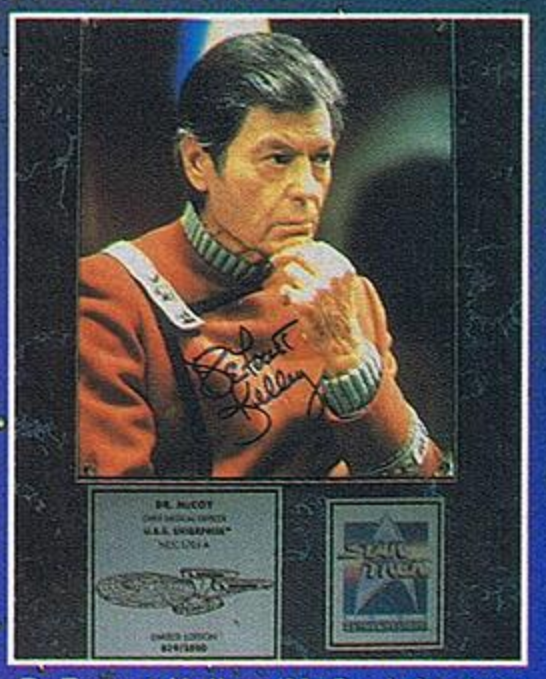

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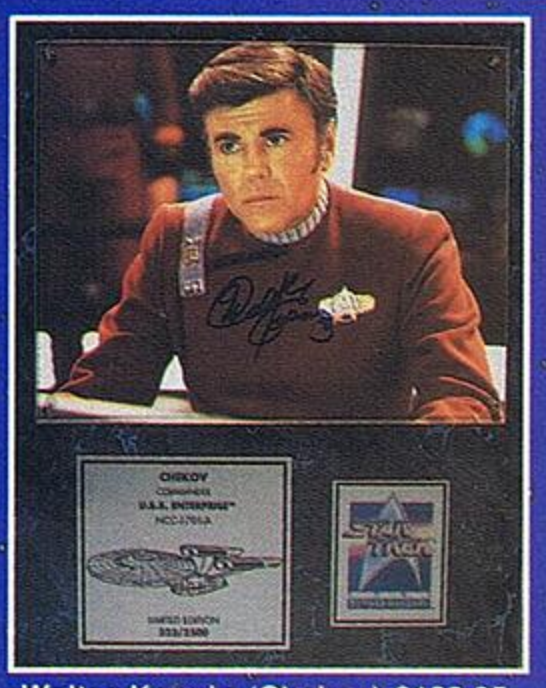

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WRITING FOR LOVE, I

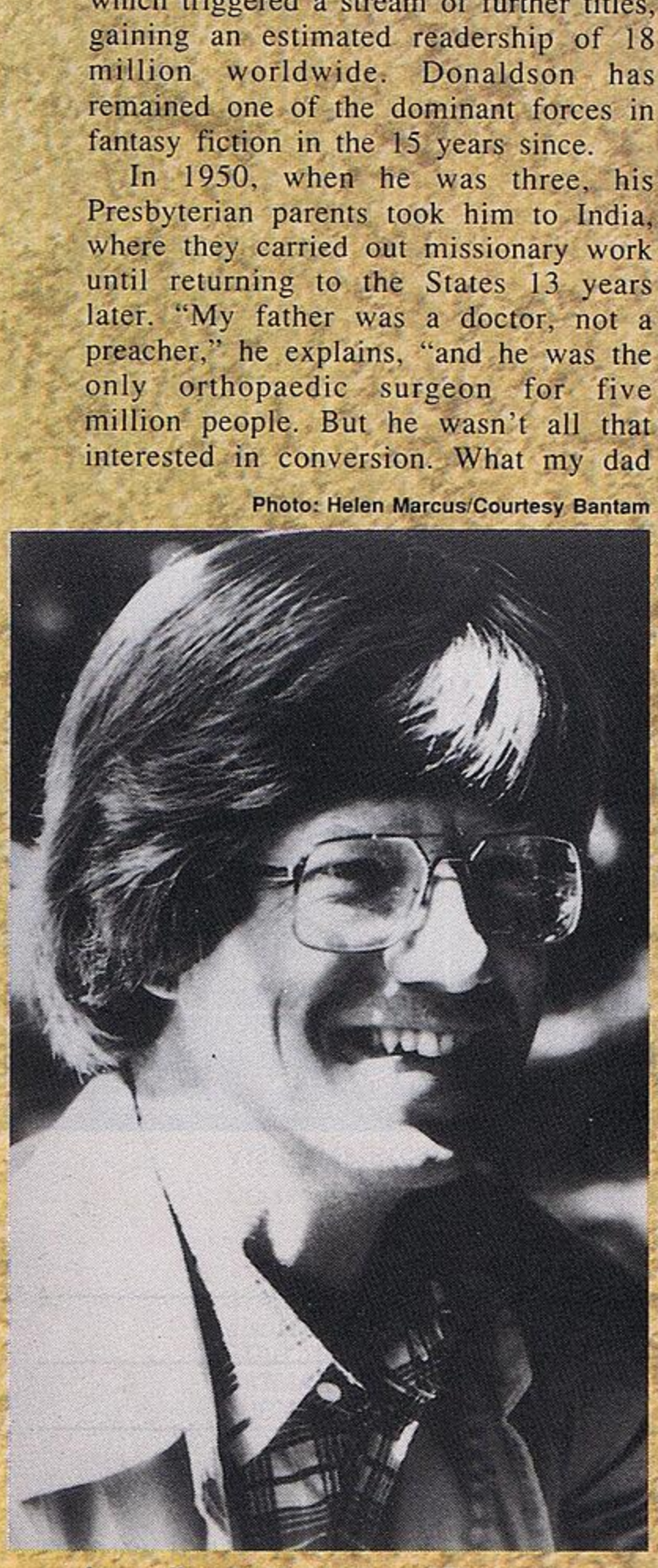
Stephen Donaldson has his reasons for chronicling the odysseys of outcasts & unbelievers.

BY STAN NICHOLLS

Stephen Donaldson's first trilogy, *The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever*, was a bestseller which triggered a stream of further titles, gaining an estimated readership of 18 million worldwide. Donaldson has remained one of the dominant forces in fantasy fiction in the 15 years since.

In 1950, when he was three, his Presbyterian parents took him to India, where they carried out missionary work until returning to the States 13 years later. "My father was a doctor, not a preacher," he explains, "and he was the only orthopaedic surgeon for five million people. But he wasn't all that interested in conversion. What my dad was interested in was being needed."

Photo: Helen Marcus/Courtesy Bantam

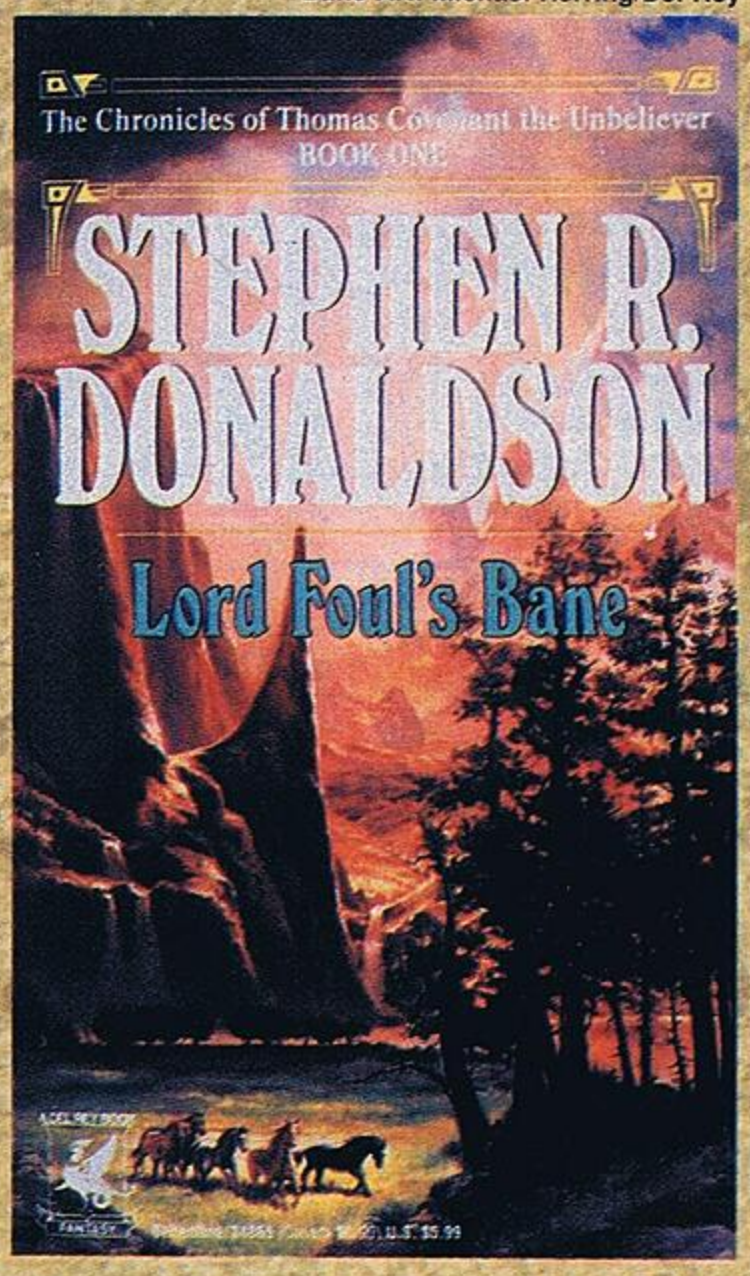


According to the author, "Fantasy's a way of dealing with the big issues of life, God and love."

Did Donaldson inherit that feeling? "There are probably parallels in the way my ego functions, but like him, I try to control it. His counterbalance was that medicine is also a form of service, and that makes it an authentic transaction.

"For me, I probably desire to be the greatest writer in the English language, or something equally huge," he continues. "My counterbalance is that I perceive *myself* through the stories I tell. I don't write stories because they're comfortable or easy for me. What I do is give myself to them, because it's my job to be their servant.

Bane Art: Michael Herring/Del Rey



"Every professional told me it was bad," Stephen Donaldson says, reflecting on his bestselling *Covenant* series' meager beginnings.

"I balance my ego by focusing on the story's integrity rather than on my own aggrandizement. The stories didn't come to me for my benefit; 'Hey, Steve, you can be rich! Just write a book about a leper.' Oh, come on; who's going to buy a book about a *leper*, for crying out loud? It was an *astonishment* to the whole world, including me, that people wanted to read it."

Donaldson wasn't a prodigious reader as a child. "Growing up in India, we had a very erratic supply of books; missionaries consistently read the Bible, *Time* magazine and mystery novels. So, in my reading at that time, there was some fantasy and science fiction, but not much. I liked what I read, but had no opportunity to pursue it as a passion."

Reading Mysteries

When he returned to the U.S. in his teens, he found it a bizarre and alienating place. "It was tough," he admits. "I had one year left in high school when I went back to America, and I spent it in front of the TV set. It was the safest way to absorb cultural information I could find. My social skills were completely different. I had grown up surrounded by *missionaries*, and here I was in standard American society. It was excruciatingly painful, and for a long time, I felt like a misfit. Now I just feel like an eccentric."

Although Donaldson harbored no early ambitions to write, this changed when he went to college. "It was a very sudden discovery for me, but when I realized it, it made sense," he recalls. "In retrospect, I could see I had been coming toward that decision all my life.

"The purpose of storytelling," says Donaldson, "is to try to answer the question of what it is to be human."

Regals Art: Michael Whelan/Del Rey

SELLING FOR MONEY

"Fortunately, I initially got intense encouragement from people. One of my English professors said, 'It's *insolent* for you to write so well.' That was nice. I thought, 'I can live with this.' If somebody had come along and said, 'You're daft, man, you have *no* talent; this is a stupid thing for a grown-up to do,' it's possible I could have been dissuaded.

"Then, I had to get around to the business of actually *learning* the craft. You get some of your pretensions beaten out of you after a while, but I was hooked by then. I was addicted to the excitement of storytelling, and that excitement became so strong that, there was no chance of my turning back."

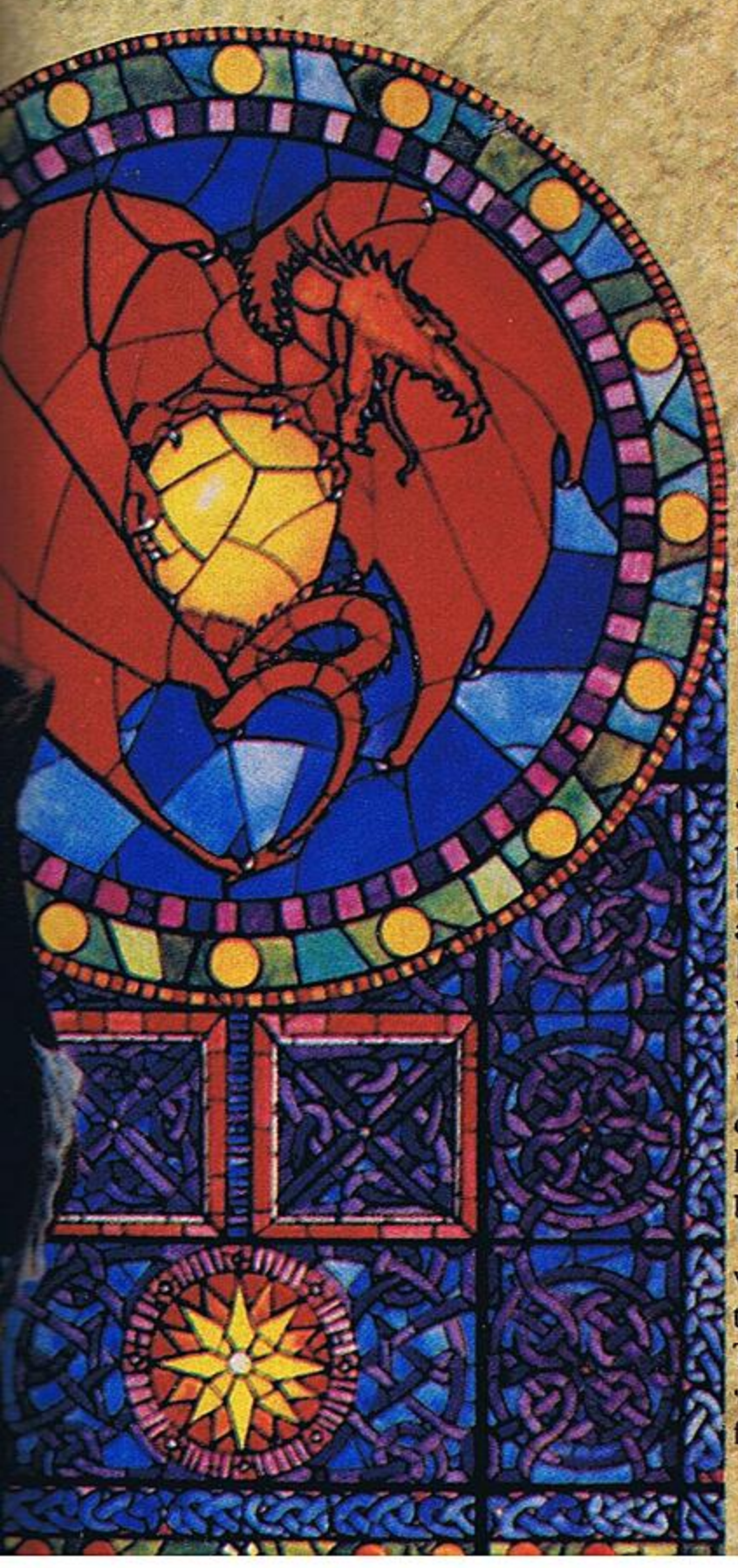
Volume one of the *Covenant* series, *Lord Foul's Bane*, was begun in college, Donaldson having conceived the idea of a hero with leprosy after hearing his father deliver a speech on the subject in India. He then submitted the trilogy to 47 publishers, and he was rejected by all.

"I got extraordinarily downhearted," he remembers. "One of the things about being the son of missionaries is that they don't raise you to have any self-confidence. I wasn't the kind of person who said, 'I know I'm good, and I'm going to stick this out!' But, I knew it was the best *I* could do. I also knew that if I wasn't good at this, there really was nothing I was ever going to be good at. That's not the same thing as knowing it was good, of course. Every professional told me it was bad, and I believed them.

"I ran out of publishers about the same time I finished the story. That was a real crisis. There I was with three big books written, and I had been rejected by every fiction publisher in the U.S. I had *no* idea where to turn. The story was done and my anchor was gone. I have no words to describe what a difficult situation that was.

"Since I couldn't stand to have the manuscripts sitting on my desk, I resubmitted them to Ballantine Books. I didn't know that since the last time my books had been there, they had fired all their editors. The new people loved the books as soon as they ran into them, and within a few weeks, I got a letter of acceptance."

Because of the sense of alienation his upbringing left, it would be easy to analyze Donaldson's books as culture shock novels, he says. "What happens in them is that the characters are ripped out of the context they're familiar with and get thrown into a totally alien set of problems. They have to sink or swim."



Writing Novels

His current series, *The Gap*, a five-volume SF saga, breaks this pattern. "For the first time, I haven't written explicitly about outsiders," he reveals. "All the *Covenant* books, my other novels and the short stories, feature outsiders. But in these books, I'm trying to start with an integrated cast, and that has been fun for me, even though I keep saying, 'Where's my outsider? Where's my way of understanding this world?' So, I've had to invent other ways to solve the problems that an outsider solves.

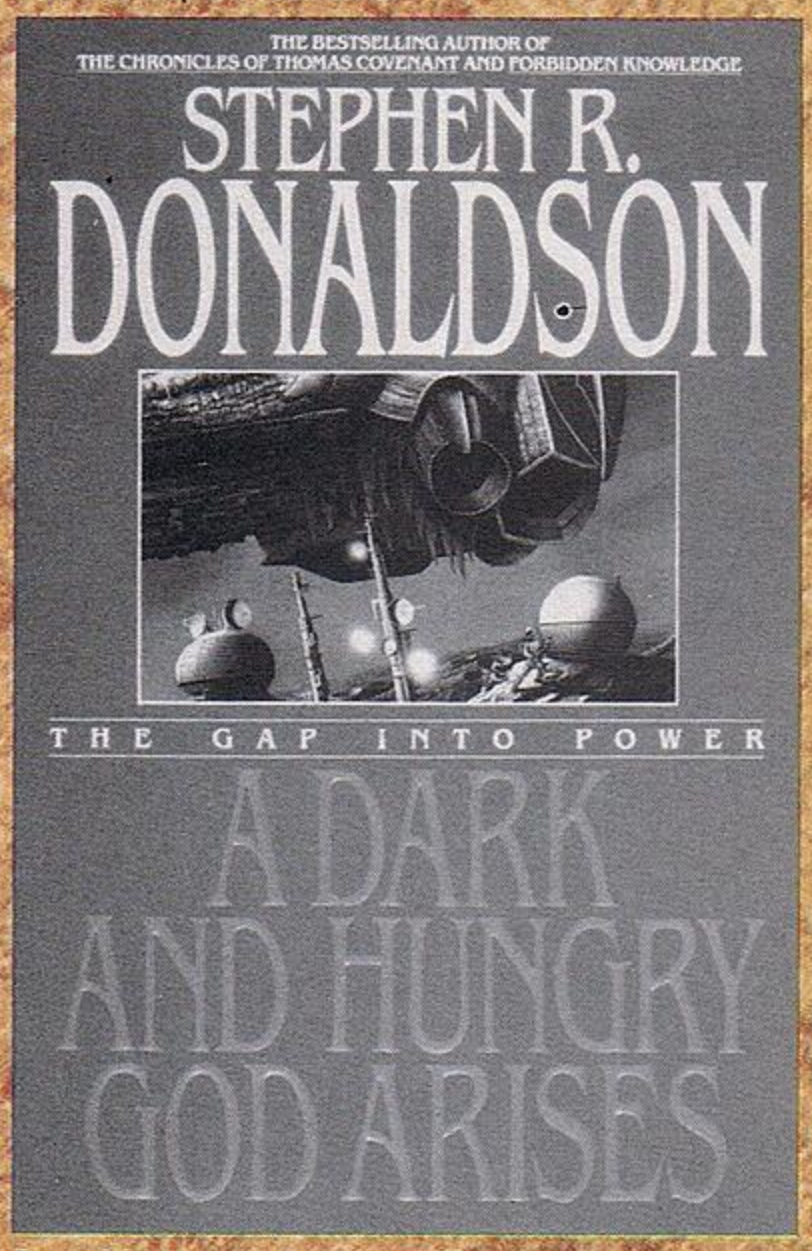
"For a storyteller, an outsider's a wonderful tool, because that's who asks the questions the reader needs answering. They solve the exposition problem, which otherwise in science fiction and fantasy can become burdensome."

Donaldson has been quoted as saying, "My characters are ultimately desperately in need of help." In what way? "That came up in the context of, 'Why are your characters always unhappy, miserable antiheroes?' " he replies. "My answer was that those are the people who *need* things like this to happen to them. If we were all sane, happy and well-adjusted, we *wouldn't* need stories at all. But the more lost a character is, the more he needs to go on a quest to find himself. We all work out our own salvation, and it's the same in stories as it is in life. I have a missionary background, right? To cast the human struggle in value-loaded Christian terms comes naturally to me."

Before realizing his passion for the written word, Donaldson had employed storytelling quite differently. "I told stories in my *head* all the time," he says, "entirely for my benefit.

"I was terrified when I was in India. It was a very scary place for me to be, especially in the early years, and I was going into some kind of personality breakdown my parents didn't have any idea what to do about. So, I invented an imaginary friend named Hunter. He was strong, brave, quick, skillful. I would imagine him standing beside me when-

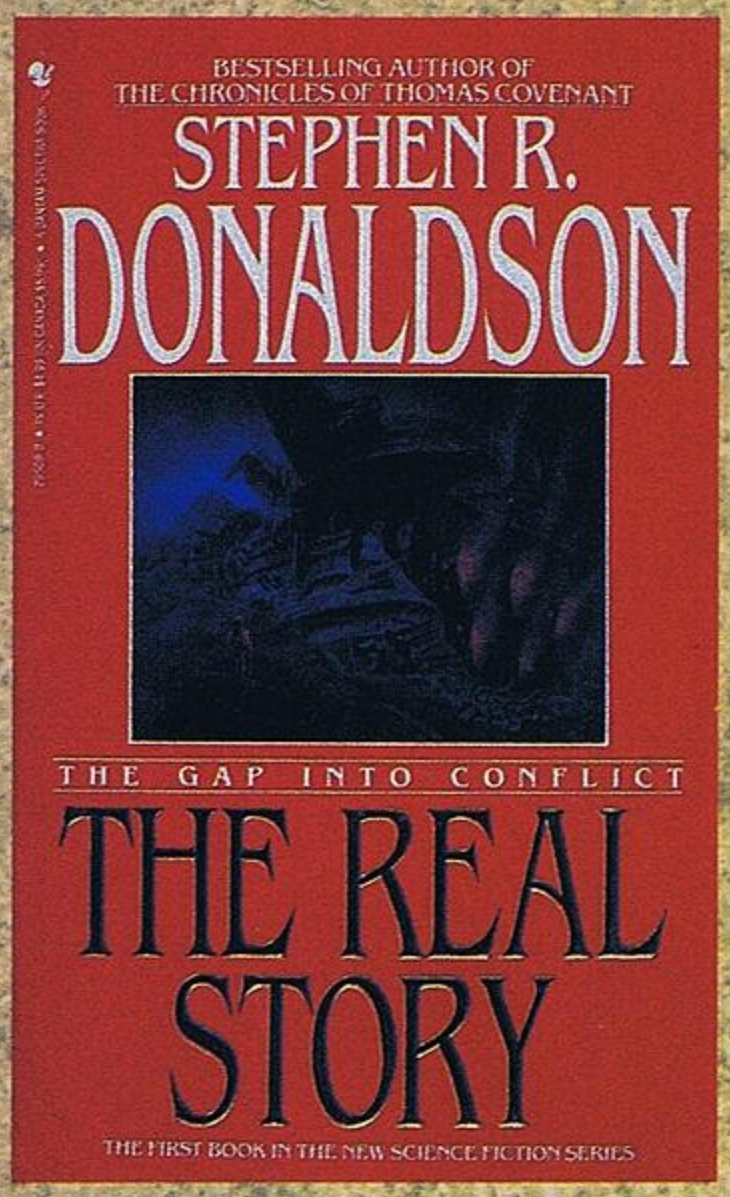
Dark Art: Stephen Youll/Bantam



Donaldson's *A Dark and Hungry God Arises*, the third *Gap* volume, debuts in hardcover this month.

ever I had to do something that frightened me. As the years passed, Hunter faded away, but that idea of imagining a character facing a problem and what would have to happen in order to resolve it remained."

The writer learned early on that *he* needed to be the protagonist in his fantasies rather than Hunter, because it wasn't good enough to have somebody else doing it. "Then, I realized stories



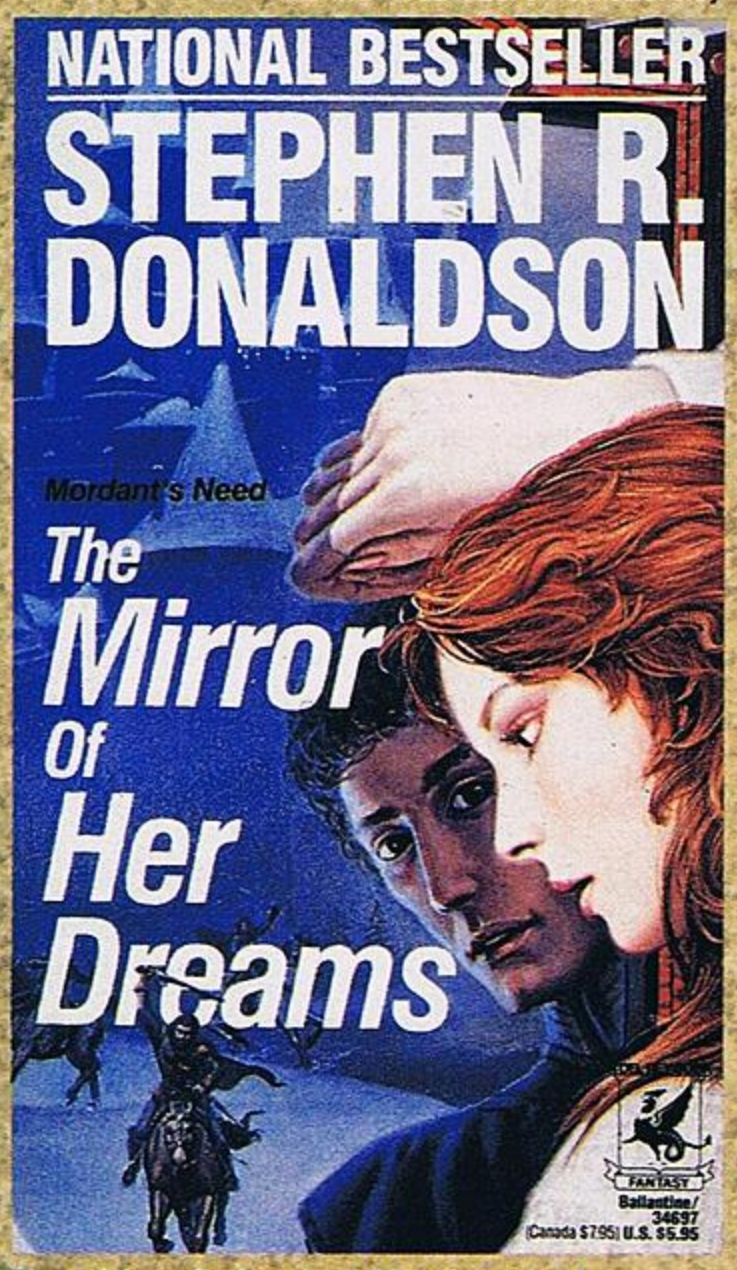
From Covenant's world of the Land to the science fiction realm of Delta Sector, *The Real Story* starts *The Gap*.

were more believable if they were told in the past tense, because that implied they had already happened and couldn't be changed. So, my fantasy life shifted into the past tense. The stories seemed even more real. These techniques directly related to my professional life later on, but I was focusing on them as a kid in ways that nobody else I know ever did.

"I don't do very much of that kind of fantasizing anymore," he admits. "It has served its purpose. I tend now to focus those energies on the more objective stories I'm telling, rather than ones for my personal benefit. These days, when I catch myself in one of those little fantasies, I know there's a problem, because if I'm telling myself a story, it must mean I'm scared of something I'm not facing. So, I try to eliminate the story and go to what scares me. As a grown-up, I can do that. But as a kid, I needed those stories desperately."

The Gap is a departure in that it's essentially space opera. Given that publishers like to categorize authors, Donaldson wasn't surprised when he met resistance to switching genres.

Mirror Art: Michael Whelan/Del Rey



Donaldson's land of Mordant isn't always what it seems within *The Mirror of Her Dreams*.

"I wrote six *Covenant* books for Ballantine and then said I wanted to do the *Mordant's Need* series. They said, 'Are you sure you wouldn't like to write more *Covenants*?' I said I wanted to do *Mordant's Need*. So, I wrote *Mordant's Need*, and it didn't sell very well in the U.S. I lost about 75 percent of my American audience, and Ballantine said, 'OK, you've had your fun. Now it's time to write more *Covenants*.' I said, 'No, I'm sorry, I'm writing the *Gap* books.' When I showed them the first two volumes, they said, 'They're *garbage*; write *Covenant* books. What's the matter? Don't you understand? The *Covenant* books are the *only* kind of books you can write.' I said, 'Thank you for your support. I'll look for another publisher.' "

Publishing Space Opera

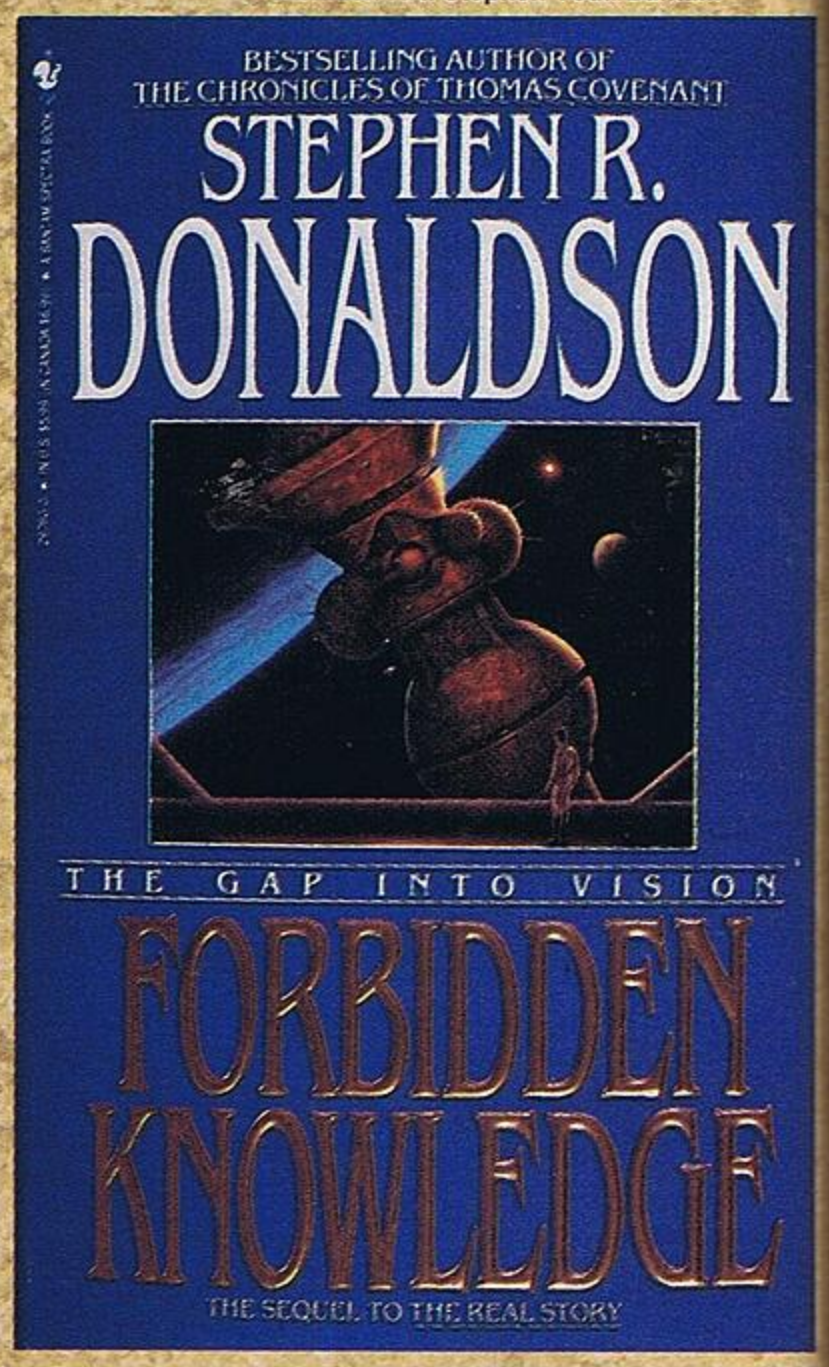
He says, "Del Rey, the division of Ballantine that published me, has a policy that if you write a book and it succeeds, then you'll write more books in the same way. They'll take originals when they have to, but they *want* repeats. Recessions do that to people. When corporations are getting torn in the pocketbook, they suddenly become very rigid in their thinking.

"I've lost *another* 75 percent of my audience with the *Gap* novels. They're selling less well than most new fiction in the U.S. It appears that in the U.S., I don't have Donaldson readers—I have *Covenant* readers. They didn't go with me to *Mordant's Need* or to the *Gap* book, but it's still an open question. There are more books to come. People may change their minds."

Donaldson has made a great deal of money from his novels, but contends commercial considerations aren't the first priority. "I write for love. I sell for money," he says. "When I sit down to write a story, the first question always is, 'Would I write this story if I couldn't find a publisher?' If the answer is yes, I go ahead and write it. If I ever catch myself thinking, 'I need to write this for money,' I don't use that idea. The fact that the books have turned out to be commercial is a fortuitous accident. I'm grateful, but I don't want to let that control what I do."

Despite Donaldson's Christian upbringing, he insists that he doesn't impose any kind of moral subtext on his stories. "Where do I get the arrogance to tell people what to think? Am I going to

Forbidden Art: Stephen Youll/Bantam

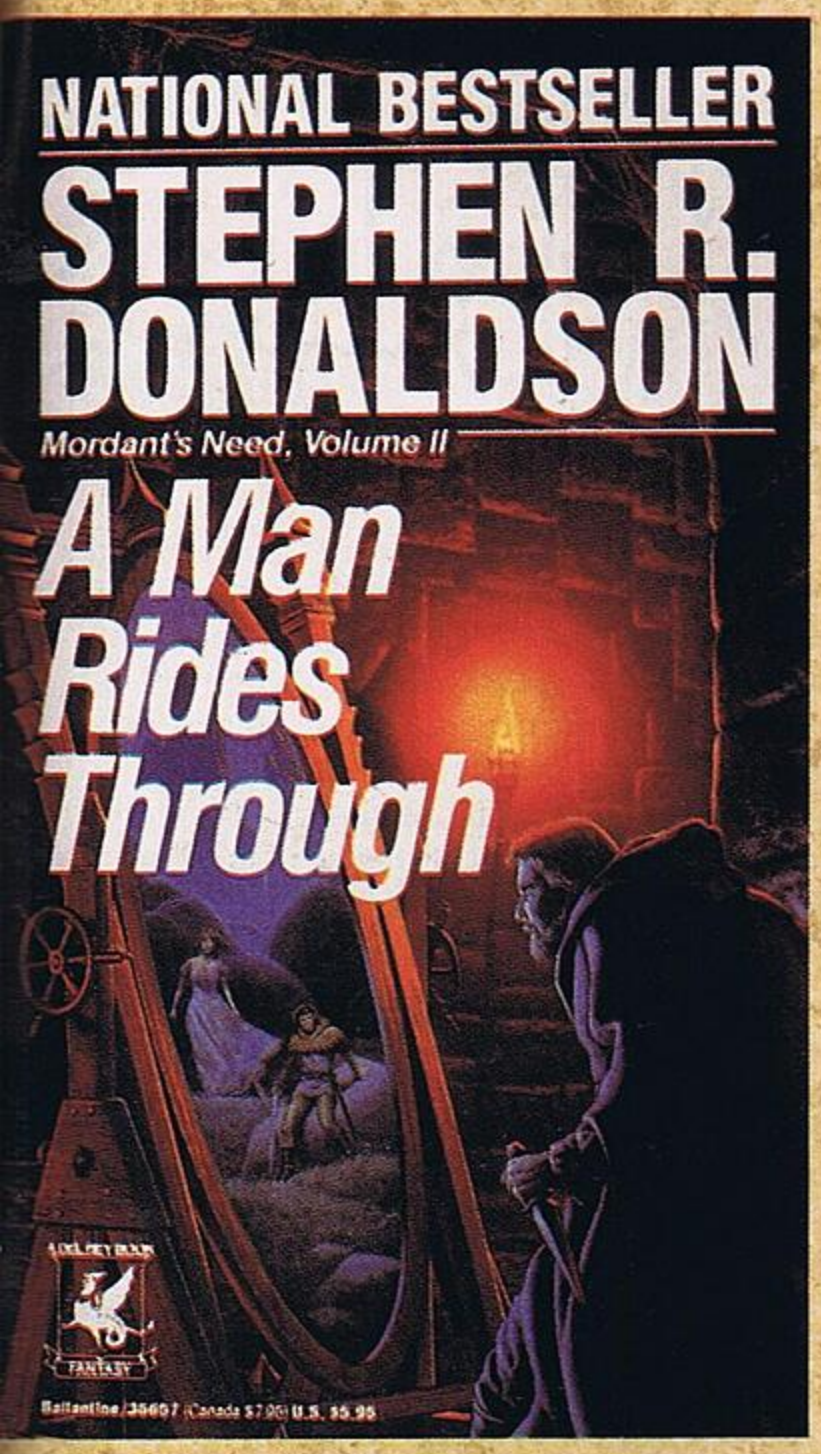


Though he lost 75 percent of his audience with his *Gap* books, Donaldson hopes "people may change their minds."

try to persuade everybody to think the same way I do? That I should use these ideas to try to make the world a better place? Whose definition of a better place are we talking about here?"

Would he, in fact, still describe himself as a Christian? "Where I grew up, they would all say that I wasn't a Christian. I'm more comfortable not using the label, but the education shaped my entire life. Many people don't realize what these missionary communities are like. They're *completely* focused soci-

Man Art: Michael Whelan/Del Rey



***The Mordant's Need* conclusion in *A Man Rides Through* follows the evil that was released from the *Mirror*.**

eties. You encounter no dissenting voices. Everybody around you agrees completely with everybody else, and they build a wall that keeps the rest of the world out.

"I feel like my brain's synapses have been wired for certain ways of thinking," he adds. "I don't do it consciously, but I know that's a *big* part of what it is I bring to my stories, and of course, it affects the way the stories are told. But it's neither good nor bad. It simply *is*."

Defending Fantasies

In the past, Donaldson has also been quoted as saying, "It's part of a writer's concern to pose questions on the importance of being. Fantasy's a way of dealing with the big issues of life, God and love." Although it sounds like an agenda of sorts, Donaldson counters: "That's my defense of fantasy you're getting there, *not* my explanation of what is actually in my books.

"I've grown up in a world which sneers at fantasy, and I've put a lot of effort into working out my apologia, but it's an apologia for the *genre*. In specific, I believe that stories carry their own themes and agendas. The purpose of storytelling, I think, is to try to answer the question of what it is to be human. But I don't have an answer which I try to embody in the stories; I'm trying to discover the answer implicit *in* the stories. *That's* the distinction.

"The relationship between me and my ideas is something I really don't care to analyze until after the book is written," he says. "Once it's on paper, it's *safe*, you know? All this talk I do about what fantasy's for happened after I wrote the *Covenant* books; those ideas didn't exist in my head when I was writing them. After I wrote the *Covenant* books, people asked me to account for their success. So, now I put on my preacher hat and pound the pulpit in defense of fantasy—and, to a certain extent, in defense of myself. But that's after the fact."

It would be nice to think that fantasy no longer needed defending. "Yes," Donaldson agrees. "It's weird that we've arrived at the point where it *needs* a defense. One of the oldest and most enduring forms of literature in all languages is fantasy. We require metaphors of magic and monsters in order to understand the human condition. It's only in modern times that we've decided this narrative language isn't serious.

"Consequently, something has gone out of our ability to think about ourselves, because that's all magic and monsters are—a way of thinking about ourselves. They're a very fruitful set of tools if you allow yourself to use them. If you deny yourself fantasy, you're truncating your ability to think about a whole range of human experiences.

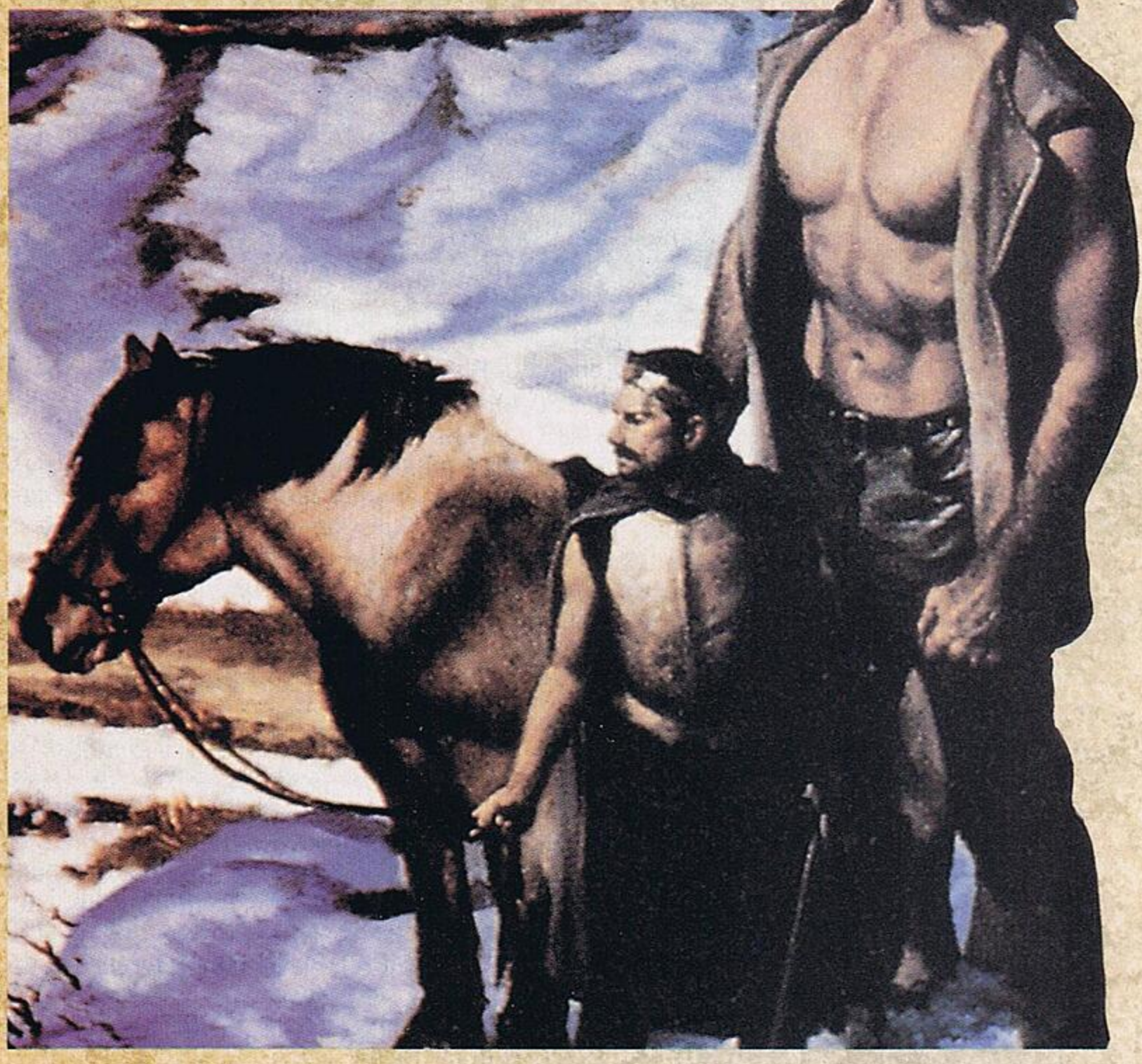
"We reached a point in our sophistication of our self-perceptions that it no longer seemed possible to make epic statements about the meaning of life. You got laughed at for doing it, and epics ceased to be written. As a result, we've lost this type of heroism, beauty and glory.

"Our anthropomorphism of the universe has been eroded steadily by what we've discovered about creation," the writer adds. "The result has been that we've clouded our ability to perceive ourselves as heroes."

Donaldson credits J.R.R. Tolkien for having opened the door. "Now, somebody like me can come along and say, 'Is it possible to re-create the connection between the epic and the real world?' If it's possible, that's what Thomas Covenant is *for*. He's the needs of the real world projected onto the stage of the Tolkienesque epic fantasy, in order to see if that sort of thing can be brought back into relevance with a sophisticated perception of modern reality. Whether I've succeeded or not," Stephen Donaldson concludes, "only time will tell." ☆

The writer thinks fantasy is "one of the oldest and most enduring forms of literature," and it may just be *The Power That Preserves*.

Power Art: Darrell K. Sweet/Del Rey



EXCELLENT ADVENTURES

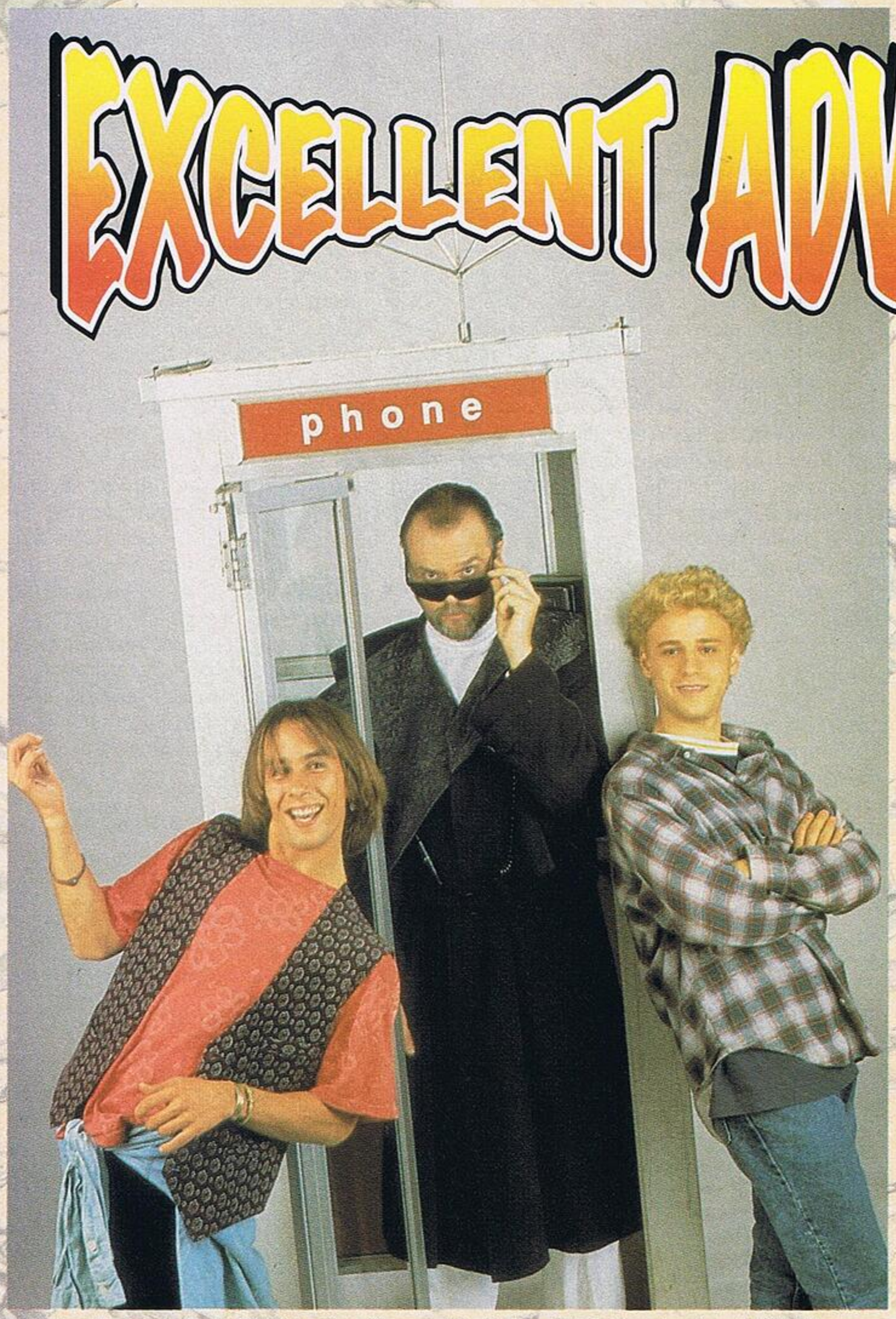


Photo: Andrew Semel

Excellent friends Ted (Christopher Kennedy), Rufus (Rick Overton) and Bill (Evan Richards) phone through time in their own TV series.

By MARC SHAPIRO

The seven episodes have aired; the folks at Fox Television are looking at the numbers. Whether *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures*, the TV series, will go to the head of the class or to Ratings Hell is up in the air.

"Hopefully, it won't be Hell," chuckles Evan (Bill) Richards, who, along with co-star Christopher (Ted) Kennedy, is awaiting a final decision on *Bill & Ted*'s future.

Executive producer Clifton Campbell, who piloted the seven *Adventures*, isn't waiting around, having jumped to executive producer on yet another Fox series, *Unlikely Suspects*. But even though he's gone, *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures* are not forgotten.

"I feel we did seven good episodes," says Campbell. "The series came at a point when audiences had essentially been flooded with Bill and Ted [the two movies and the cartoon series], but I felt we were able to give the audience a different take on it.

"We tried to capitalize on the opportunities that series TV presents," he continues. "Between the movies and the TV series, people were certainly aware of the franchise and the ideas. There was a charm to the characters that people were willing to see again."

But before they could see the time-traveling Bill and Ted, the TV concept had to run a gauntlet that Campbell—who admits to "coming on the series late in the process"—attempts to chronicle.

"*Bill & Ted* was actually in development a couple of seasons ago. It was always a great idea, but one on a back burner," he explains. "Chris Matheson and Ed Solomon, who wrote the original movie and the sequel, had an idea for the series that Fox wasn't too excited about. Then, Darren [*Beverly Hills 90210*] Star came up with an idea that Fox got excited about, and the show was on again.

"But by that time, the second *Bill & Ted* movie was coming out, and a clause in the contracts said the TV series couldn't go until *Bogus Journey* made a certain amount of money. *Bogus Journey*

"Nobody could figure out what the adventure with Albert Einstein should be."

then came out and didn't do the business everybody hoped for, and that delayed things even more. Finally, with the episodes completed, Fox gave us a summer slot."

Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures: The Series highlights the Wyld Stallyns and their time-traveling phone booth as they hopscotch through comic misadventures. Rufus, their mentor from the 27th century (played by *Willow*'s Rick Overton in the series), attempts to keep the pair on a course that will result in a bright future for all. Adding to the comic mix is Bill's father, Mr. Preston (Don Lake), his beautiful young wife, Missy (Lisa Wilcox), and Mr. Kielson (Danny Breen), who owns the hardware store where Bill and Ted work.

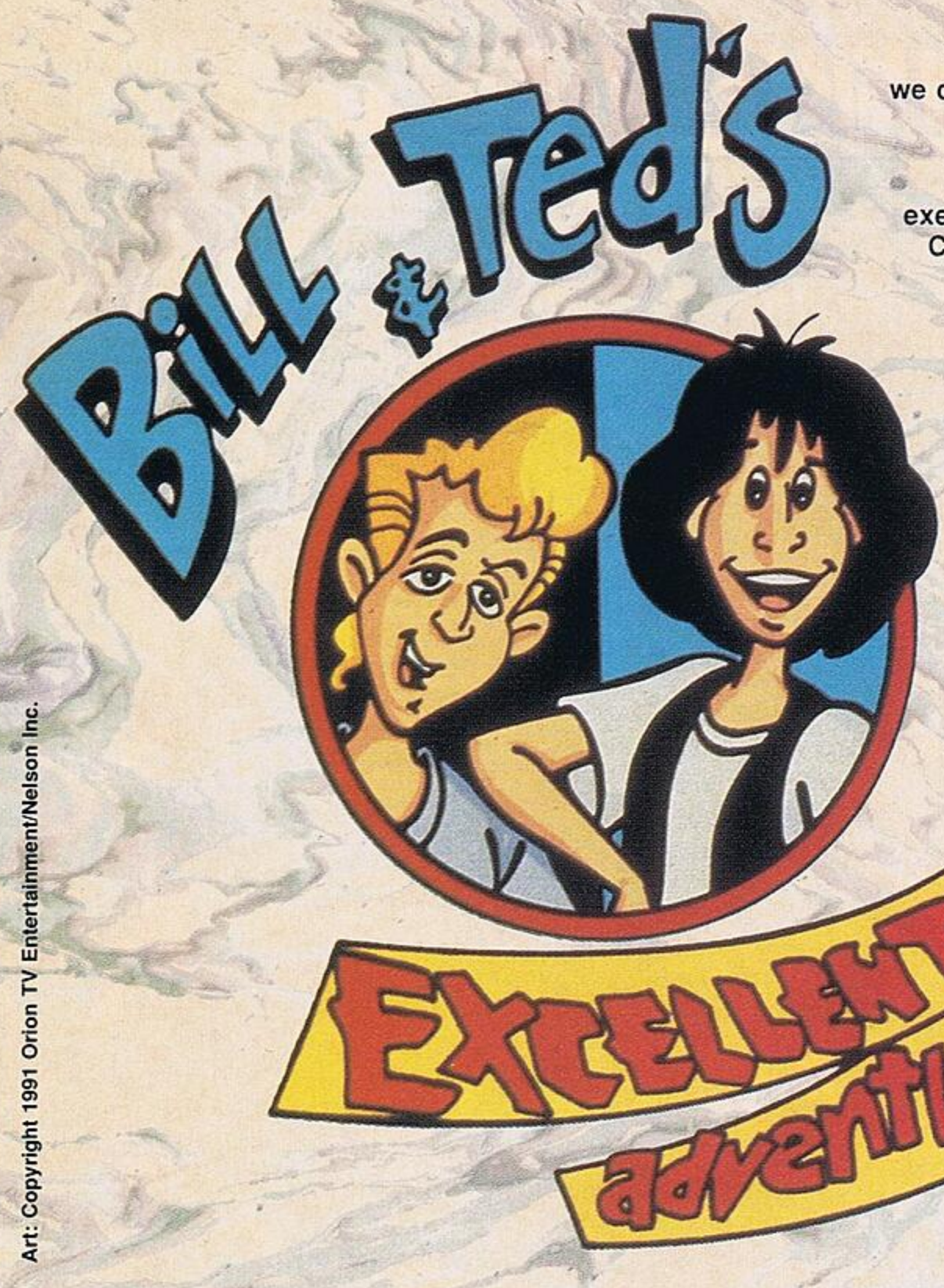
Campbell claims that the TV series, while in keeping with the first film's spirit, did take some liberties with the original idea.

"We felt that having Bill and Ted go back and forth in time each week would get stale. So, while we knew we had to keep the phone booth and some time-travel element, we also knew that we had to challenge that aspect. So, we played

Live-Action Photos: Copyright 1992 Fox Broadcasting Company

MARC SHAPIRO, STARLOG's West Coast Correspondent, authored When Dinosaurs Ruled the Screen *(Image, $12.95). He profiled Danny DeVito in issue #183.*

Bill & Ted traveled to the tube, but was the trip really necessary?



"They did things we could never hope or afford to do" in the animated series, says executive producer Clifton Campbell.

around with things a little bit. In one episode, we took them into another dimension and into a cable TV system. In another, we shrunk Ted down to the size of a raisin."

The producer explains that time travel wasn't the only hurdle the show had to overcome.

"It's difficult to do a series where the lead characters don't grow or have an evolving arc. Bill and Ted stay Bill and Ted, so the challenge in creating scripts was to come up with stories that were wrapped around incidents they bump into in their everyday lives. The idea was that Bill and Ted are basically fish out of water, dealing with things that don't make sense to them. For example, we had one episode in which Bill and Ted were having trouble meeting girls, and they use the phone booth to bring Casanova into the present to watch how he handled the problem."

Art: Copyright 1991 Orion TV Entertainment/Nelson Inc.

Though "goofy at times," Evan "Bill" Richards found the characters to simply have "an attitude that was different."

Campbell notes that the live-action *Bill & Ted* differs, in many ways, from the animated version (whose cartoon voices were supplied by the movie Bill and Ted, Alex Winter and Keanu Reeves, before being replaced by TV Bill and Ted Richards and Kennedy). "In the cartoon series, they did things like go inside somebody's stomach. They did things we could *never* hope or afford to do."

The producer's report card on the seven *Bill & Ted* TV adventures translates into "a solid B. We had some strong episodes and weak ones. I consider 'Totally Wonderful Life' to be the best example of what we were attempting to do with the series."

In that episode, Rufus awakens from a nightmare in which something has gone terribly wrong. He time-travels back to find that Bill and Ted have messed up, and the result is that Ted's father separates them permanently. Rufus returns to an awful future stemming from that past separation. He once again returns to the past, specifically six years after the separation, and witnesses Bill and Ted attempting to live their lives on their own.

"It was probably the most ambitious thing we did," Campbell notes. "That episode essentially looked at the legend of Bill and Ted, and it forced us to deal with three different levels of reality: The present, six years into the future and the distant future. Believe me, that's a lot to cram into 21 minutes.

"The episodes that didn't work so well were the ones where we would go back in time and have to be talking heads. The Albert Einstein episode was tough in that Bill and Ted had to sit there listening to a guy talking about things they really couldn't relate to. It got-off track because nobody could figure out what the adventure with Albert Einstein should be. Consequently, it was flat and boring."

Campbell points out that *Bill & Ted* was at its best when "the stories allowed Bill and Ted to just bump through their adventures. Those were the episodes that touched on the innocence in all of us. You knew in the end that they were going to come out on top and that, in some ways, they would wind up much better adjusted because of it."

Evan Richards looks back at his stint as the former half of *Bill & Ted* and winces. It's not that it was a horrible experience. It's just that "it was kind of

(continued on page 72)

LINER NOTES

Just over 10 years ago, Harrison Ford was hanging precariously from a building on a rain-soaked, misty studio backlot. I know he was there. Jim Steranko told me.

At the time (1981), I was working as an editorial staffer on *Mediascene Prevue*, editor/publisher/raconteur Steranko's magazine of "today's personalities and tomorrow's entertainment" (a tagline I coined). Jim was on location in Los Angeles, covering the movie version of the legendary Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

It was a film called *Blade Runner*.

Art: Kevin Brockschmidt

And, boy, as time progressed, did it get more exciting!

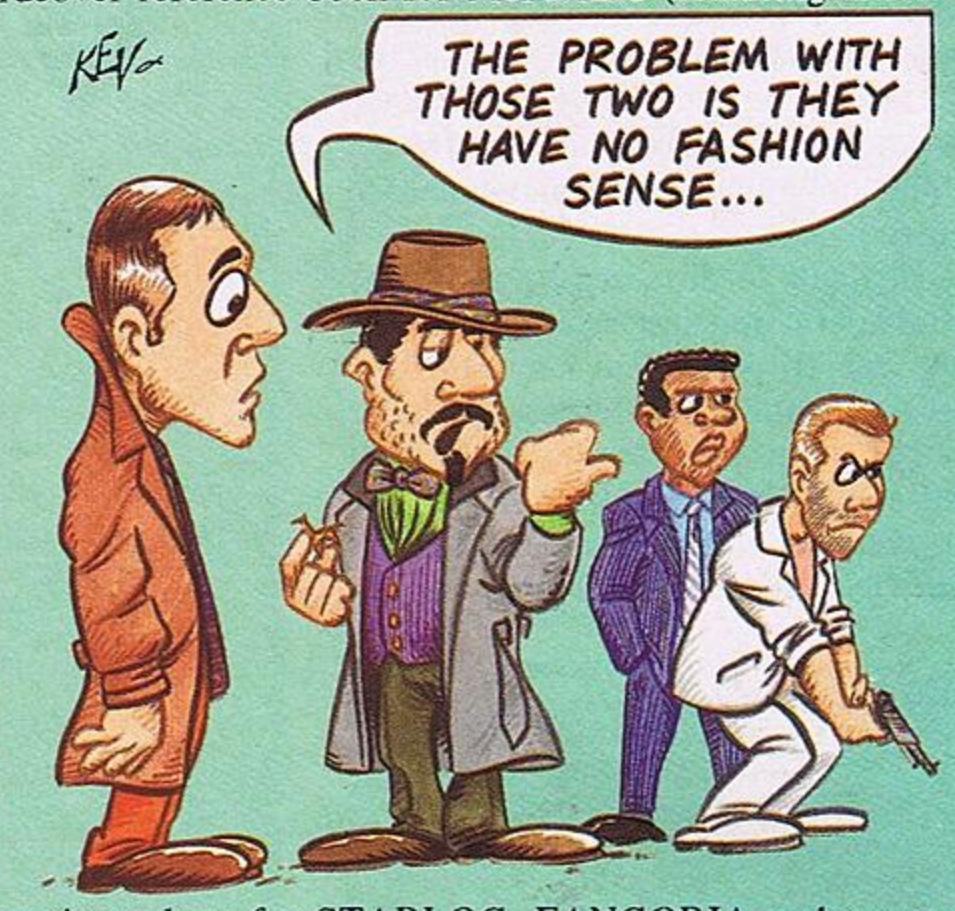
At *Prevue*, Steranko interviewed (and I edited) interviews with director Ridley Scott, futuristic designer Syd Mead, Sean Young and others. While at STARLOG (a magazine I would join later that year), Editor (and Phil Dick fan) Howard Zimmerman and then-Managing Editor Sue Adamo supervised the film's coverage (mostly by writer James Van Hise, who would also go on to edit genre media magazines). STARLOG, of course, interviewed Scott, Mead and Young, as well as the movie's screenwriters (Hampton Fancher and David Peoples), Rutger Hauer, Philip K. Dick (who tragically died before the film's release) and others. And out in LA, freelancers Randy & Jean-Marc Lofficier (who would become regular STARLOG contributors in early 1983) interviewed Scott, Mead, Fancher, Peoples, production designer Laurence G. Paull and others for a media magazine published in France.

Of course, we all were rounding up the usual suspects, asking some of the same questions. And we weren't alone—other genre magazines, film publications (the since-defunct *American Film*, *Film Comment*; neither *Premiere* nor *Movieline* existed) and newspapers would interview those same creators.

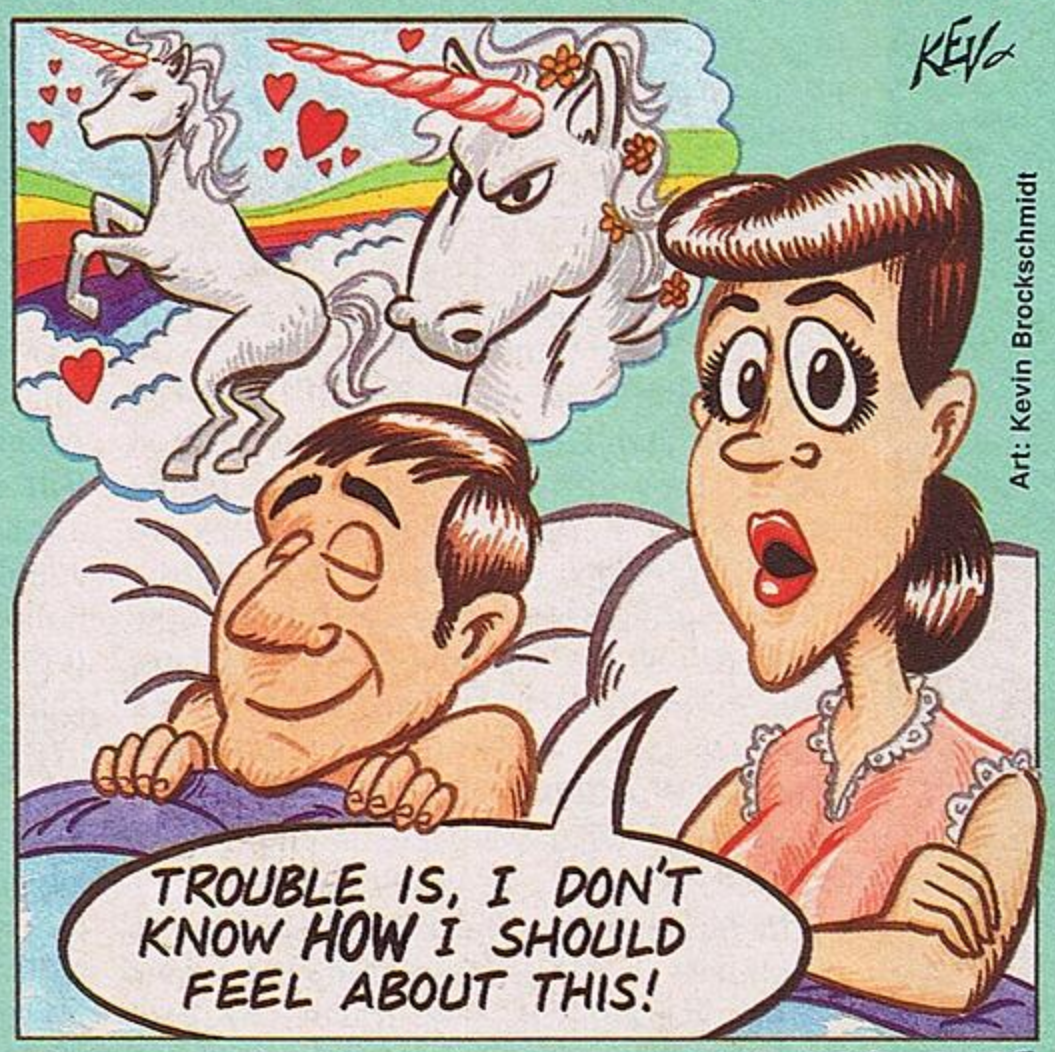
Regarding some of that coverage today, with the benefit of a decade's hindsight and lots more editorial experience, I see questions unasked, topics unexplored, graphics unused. Ah, yes, to go back and do it better.

And then this opportunity presented itself. *Blade Runner*—which I firmly regard as one of the 10 best SF films ever made—is scheduled to be re-released theatrically this fall. It's a new version, the cut of the film that Ridley Scott originally intended. This *Blade Runner* eliminates some of the material added to the movie just prior to its 1982 release (elements which, perversely, earned critical brickbats) and restores some deleted footage (like the unicorn dream sequence, which might have been critically scorned anyway). This revised *Blade Runner* is certainly intriguing. Will it be merely as good? Better? Worse? Or most likely, just a *different* version of this futuristic detective story? No matter what, it *must* be seen.

Meanwhile, STARLOG writers Lee Goldberg, Bill Rabkin and Randy & Jean-Marc Lofficier were sifting through their old manuscripts to assemble *Making Movies 1980-90*, a forthcoming hardcover reference book for McFarland (featuring articles and interviews done for STARLOG, FANGORIA and many other magazines circa 1980-1990). And Jean-Marc came upon their *Blade Runner* interviews—portions of which were published in France, some of which hadn't been published anywhere, and most importantly, *none* of which had ever been published in America. You're probably ahead of me now—maybe because you read the Contents Page. But, of course, I quickly bought all those "lost" *Blade Runner* interviews and we're presenting them here (see page 35). They duplicate, in a minor way, some of the info in the pieces I shepherded into print at *Prevue* a decade ago and the articles published around the same time in STARLOG. But hey, I read (and reread) both sets of stories—and I still found *new* information in these latest pages.



Art: Kevin Brockschmidt



Art: Kevin Brockschmidt

THE DELETED UNICORN DREAM SEQUENCE

And with Ridley Scott's revised version in release, I think you'll also discover new revelations about that futuristic world of Replicants and humans, a film called *Blade Runner*.

—David McDonnell/Editor
(August 1992)

The future in STARLOG: Gordon Scott swings in as **Tarzan**...**Anne Francis** re-visits **Forbidden Planet**... and **Robert Sheckley** contemplates this mad universe in **STARLOG #185, on sale Tuesday, November 3, 1992.**

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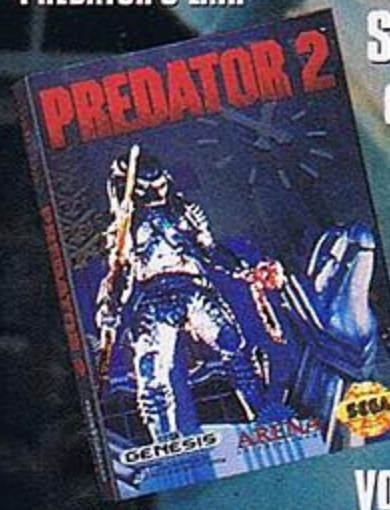

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